"Where there is no vision the people perish"

JULY 1945 AUGUST

The POETRY REVIEW

THE JOURNAL OF THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED)
AND A MAGAZINE OF GENERAL
POETIC INTEREST

Published Bi-monthly by
THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED)
33 Portman Square · London W1

American Editorial Office:
299 York Avenue · New York

ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE NET
(Annual Postal Subscription, 9/6; U.S.A., 2.50 dollars)

"The leading poetry magazine of the world . . . of international eminence"—LITERARY DIGEST

THE POETRY REVIEW

No. 3 1945 Vol. XXXVI

CONTENTS

★

No Substitute for Sense, Vera Ashurst 139

To His Excellency Viscount Wavell, H. W. Harding; *Requiem for a Rear-Gunner*, W. J. Clapham, R.A.F. 142

The Soul's Destroyer and Other Poems, Lawrence W. Hockey 143

The Olive, Harold Goad 148

More Comments on G. M. Hopkins, M. D. Hastings 149

Sunset Scene in Wartime, M. E. Millen 153

Bolton Abbey, May 30th, 1942, Leslie Birley Brooks; *"On Being Blinded,"* Maurice Little 154

Tale to the Firelight, Hubert Riley 155

Alpha and Omega, Ethel Walter 157

Gnat, Jean Kenward 159

Lord Lonsdale, T. E. Casson; *Song of the Land Girl*, Evelyn Lloyd 160

Death of an Old Lady, J. E. Winbolt; *Spring Winds*, G. E. Mullins 161

Words without Song, Cassandra Page-Turner; *Gnostic*, W. H. Dennett-Morgan 162

The Braver Battle, Eric Peters 163

Journey, Margaret Howarth; *Germania*, Ruth Tenny Wolfers; *Reflections at Table*, Chloris Heaton Ross 164

True Thomas, T. M. Auld 165

Valedictory, Madeleine Wrenne Jarman 166

The Real Southey, Mary Winter Were 167

The Poems of 1944–5 170

Poets and Pretenders 171

The Victory, J. Sibly 180

News from Moscow: Poets and Poetry in War-Time Russia 181

Dynamics of American Poetry: CVII, Alice Hunt Bartlett 189

The Personal Anthology, Christmas Humphreys 195

Australian Verse, 196

Invictus and Song, J. A. C. Ardagh 198

To the Editor: *Redwood Anderson's Poetry*, Raymund Bourne; *On a Sonnet*, J. Scott Parsons; *The Gardener's Plea*, F. Lucas Thompson; *Stanley G. Dowhan*, Charles Bruce; *Again Those Birds*, Grace B. Sherwood 201

The Premium Editor's Report 209

Exequy, The Premium Poem, Jean Kenward 211

Speech, Leslie Greene; *The Last Companion*, E. G. Oxenham 212

The Annual Meeting of The Poetry Society iv

All Literary communications should be addressed to the Editor, The Poetry Review, 33 Portman Square, London, W.C.1. No MSS. can be considered or returned unless accompanied by stamped addressed envelope. The Editor accepts no responsibility for the safe custody or return of any MS.

Trade Agents: The Rolls House Publishing Co., 2 Breams Buildings, London, E.C.4.

Printed in Great Britain by Unwin Brothers Limited, London and Woking, and Published by the Proprietors, The Poetry Society (Incorporated), at 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

The Poetry Review

THE JOURNAL OF THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED)
AND A MAGAZINE OF GENERAL POETIC INTEREST

VOL. XXXVI 1945 NUMBER 3

No Substitute for Sense

OUR perception of beauty is usually so variable, so sudden and transitory an experience, that it is difficult to remember that beauty itself is a constant quality with a diversity of modes. The ability to appreciate it in any mode demands faculties of emotional and intellectual experience which grow with the things they feed on; it is to these faculties that the sister arts of music and poetry make an immediately winning appeal. The primary appeal is to the emotions, through the senses, but emotion itself implies some conflict of ideas or sub-conscious associations. Unlike the musician, the poet cannot dispense with meaning, because words are his material, and however he uses them their popular meaning must either subserve or detract from the experience he wishes to convey.

Sound and time are interdependent in poetry as in music. These arts share the elements of melody, harmony, rhythm and tone-colour. Lyrical poetry is nearest to music because it is spontaneous song, the expression of emotional experience unweighted by intellectuality. The true lyric is an immortal art form because no other medium could perform its function; it has meaning, but the whole effect of this type of poem is that of an invocation of more than meaning. The music in the poet's words conditions our mood, but the music is in more than the words; the meaning itself sets up emotional vibrations which supplement the verbal sounds. These facts are evident and unanalysable; so are the effects which certain sound combinations have upon us. It may be that sounds, even particular arrangements of sounds, are part of an inherited memory, for in response to them we know ourselves to be inhabitants of Time, not merely of the Present. The music of the poet disarms criticism, prepares us to accept completely the meaning or vision in his work; his victory is always a victory over our unconsciousness, he reclaims life from the death of unknowing, and the more directions in which he extends our consciousness the greater the success, or utility, of his art.

The older poets were musical because they wrote by ear, not by rule. Since their time the devices of metre and rhythm, assonance and dissonance, onomatopea, repetition, parallelism, have been investigated and tabulated to make a craftsman's apprenticeship for the modern poet. The subtleties of rhythm evade classification, it is the poet's inborn magic by which he infects us with his own emotion. We know that assonance is a great instrument for playing word music—"And let the soaring organs loudly play"—we recognise the mighty harmonies in:

"Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own?
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep autumnal tone."

We hear the singing quality in frequent rhymes; we know how strongly the repetition, not only of single words, but of poetical constructions, helps to create the final music expressing a complex emotion; we agree that the final concord of the sonnet makes it a peculiarly satisfying form. But in all these artifices we have but the modes of verbal music; the essence is still something to be expressed obliquely by the poet, or to be appreciated emotionally by the reader. We are brought back to the constant quality of beauty, or—the same thing in its dynamic form—inspiration; we are brought back to the realisation that there is such a thing as a "contemporary inspiration," although the reasons why individual possessors of it adapt themselves to different modes of expression still baffle even the psychologists.

In Shakespeare the plainest words are sometimes invested with music and made almost unbearably moving by the intensity of his emotion. In him we have power of intellect and depth of passion in restless contention; from this emotional conflict sprang the treasures of his poetry. Essentially the same conflict beset Donne, but in him it was a less glorious torment; he was torn between a pagan insistence on the senses for the realisation of physical beauty, and an equally strong aspiration of the spirit, beyond such fulfilment, towards an ideal beauty. He sought resolution of his conflict in the Church; although sometimes the music and ritual stung him as a failure of the Church itself, they appeased some hunger in him. All his life he struggled to find some "substitute for sense," but found none; he achieved saintliness, but always came back to the belief that the soul's only release was through the senses.

Milton was another poet in whom heart and head never came to terms. His emotions betrayed him into making Satan the real hero of *Paradise Lost*, limned superbly against the heavenly choir; it is this power of sustained emotion which makes him so incomparable a master of developed music. In *Paradise Lost* there is a harmony of part answering to part, of note matching note, each fulfilling and contributing to the poetic conception of the whole. To appreciate it there must be a power of sustained emotion; one mark of the poem's excellence is its power, consisting largely in its cumulative music, of upholding the reader in a mood of willing receptivity.

In reaction against the untidy passions of the Pre-Restoration period, the Augustan poets trimmed their poems to a utility spareness, and music was reduced to mere verbal device which betrayed the minor poets into something like triteness. But although they are the least musical of poets, the Augustans enjoyed the preciseness of metre; sometimes they achieved almost in spite of themselves, new and subtle harmonies in the most hackneyed metres.

In Tennyson's light music emotion thins to sentiment. He is tinny in comparison with Milton, although undoubtedly a master of his medium, unmatched in ease and grace of execution. Deep meaning and ecstatic vision do not consistently prevail, and his beautiful sound effects, though superficially pleasing, fall short of sustained music. For this there must be cumulative arrangement, a structure of sounds contributing to a final effect.

In contrast, Meredith's so-called "difficult" poetry is genuinely musical in a modern way. His poetry is close-knit and sinewy with thought, and its music only emerges fully when the meaning has been grasped. His poems are a perennial delight, their music inexhaustible. He sometimes uses false rhyme as a musician uses discord, to be resolved in the harmony of following perfect rhymes, another essentially modern device.

Georgian poetry is disappointing, for in spite of its genuine lyrical quality, its range of subjects, its facility and sweetness, it lacks intellectual force and depth of passion. Its easy emotion appealed to a popular contemporary taste which would undoubtedly have ignored or reviled "vision" had it been forthcoming.

The old conflict of sense versus ideal which runs through English poetry is exemplified again in T. S. Eliot, whose development bears some affinity to that of Donne. It was he who wrote unhappily:

"Donne, I suppose, was such another
Who found no substitute for sense."

He is a poet of transition, the product of a period of bewilderment, and after achieving in his poetry "a synthesis of ruin" he too has sought the authority of the Church. His use of the chorus stresses the fact that poetry, as well as music, is really a communal activity; the music sleeps until the verse is spoken. The deliberate use of musical construction in poetry seems to be one of the most promising ways of development open to modern poetry. The music of a poem can be used like counterpoint, as a kind of sub-plot contributing to and illuminating the major plot of "meaning," in a double rendering of the subject. But technical devices must subserve, not dominate.

T. S. Eliot has recently brought out a book, *Introducing James Joyce*. Joyce had his share of original genius, but his inspiration was small, and although his conflict was essentially the same as Shakespeare's, Donne's, Eliot's, it resulted, in his case, in a diminution of creative power. From "Chamber Music," a set of exquisitely wrought songs in the Elizabethan manner, and the excellent "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," he moved deliberately into the blinding maze of technical experiment. All the music he had was spent, but it is imperishable coinage. Perhaps one of the reasons why music in words, or in its own right, is so moving, is that the threat of silence is never absent. Silence waits on the edge of sound; its fingers separate the slow chords that sing of beauty and mortality, indivisible.

Vera Ashhurst.

Perhaps there is no more popular writer in America than Robert Frost. Born in San Francisco of New England parents, we find some eleven books of poetry to his credit and he journeyed through college after college. A student at Dartmouth in 1892, then followed his receiving at Harvard his M.A. in 1899. It would seem he possessed an endless interest in college learning for we find him at Amherst, University of Michigan, Wesleyan University, St. Lawrence University, Yale, Middleburg College, Bowdoin, New Hampshire State University, Columbia University and Williams College. We find him again at Harvard in 1937, then University of Colorado and Princeton University. It would appear Mr. Frost toured the entire collegiate world of the U.S.A. His *Masque of Reason* (Holt) is a humorous consideration of a meeting between Job and his wife and God—and the Devil!

TO HIS EXCELLENCY VISCOUNT WAVELL: VICEROY OF INDIA AND PRESIDENT OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

THAT man is great, who, in his heart, preserves
The gleam of song amidst the blaze of fame;
Whom neither praise nor perfidy unnerves
To guard its gentle but immortal flame.
He knows of sweeter words, and more divine,
Than those which laud his virtues worthily,
Words that on lyric tongues are vintage wine
When inspiration flames in prosody.

For him no pomp nor pageantry can dim
This glory that is all men's; which can speak
Unspoken solace to the sad, and limn
The changeless face of Truth for those who seek.
Though guns shall thunder for Vice-Regal state,
With nobler music is his heart elate.

H. W. Harding.

Requiem for a Rear-Gunner

AND should you weep for him, if so inclined,
Then mingle knowledge with your gift of tears,
Bare not your heart alone—unveil your mind
Upon the history of his nineteen years.

He kicked a ball in narrow London streets
Then pedalled groceries round Walthamstow;
He learnt of love in cheaper Gaumont seats,
Set it to jazz-time on his radio.

He had a wife for seven magic nights,
His eyes grew softer in a small hotel;
They shared a dream of London rich with lights
And all the things that Woolworth has to sell.

He sat, the sergeant-child, among his crew
And heard with awe the gross Great Man expound
The cult of polish—extol the sacred few
Who'd glistened long and loyally—on the ground.

Against his shaggy head he brushed a sleeve,
Within the barber's shop considered "pride,"
Bought contraceptives in the hope of leave
Then flew to Nuremberg that night and died.

R.A.F.

Walter J. Clapham.

"The Soul's Destroyer and Other Poems"

THE FIRST BOOK OF W. H. DAVIES

JUST forty years ago, in March 1905, appeared an unpretentious volume, bound in brown paper covers, and containing forty poems in its 108 pages. The title page bore the inscription, "The Soul's Destroyer and Other Poems," by William H. Davies; the bottom of the page giving the information—"Of the Author, Farmhouse, Marshalsea Road, S.E. Two Shillings and Sixpence." The last page gave the name of the printers—Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C. This was the first book of William Henry Davies—beggar, tramp, and doss-house inmate—who was to become one of the most astonishing figures in the history of English poety.

To become a poet had been the life-long ambition of W. H. Davies. His first poem, "On Death," was written when he was fourteen; and his second poem, describing a storm at night, was composed and printed a year or two later. However, he did not seriously begin to practise the art of poetry until he lost his foot in a train-jumping accident in Canada in 1899, when he was nearly twenty-eight. This unfortunate incident put an end to his life of vagabondage overseas and compelled him to restrict his activities to England and Wales, for he was now severely handicapped in his movements. Hence, he settled in London, living in cheap lodging houses on eight shillings a week—a legacy from his grandmother Davies; and he determined to become a poet.

Davies then began to study poetry and assiduously practised the art of writing, his output being very prolific; for, in twelve months, he wrote two tragedies, a comedy, a volume of humorous essays, a long poem, a hundred sonnets, and hundreds of short poems. At the end of that time he submitted a collection of short poems sufficient to make a small volume to a publisher who offered to publish it at the author's expense for twenty-five pounds. Davies could not raise the money, however, so that publication had to be indefinitely postponed.

About two and a half years later, Davies had another similar offer; and, though his income had diminished to six shillings a week, he made up his mind to save this money and to earn more by peddling laces, pins, needles, and buttons about the country. In this way, in six months, he hoped to save between nine and ten shillings a week out of his earnings as a pedlar and, at the same time, he would be about ten pounds in pocket through not drawing on his income. He resolved to tramp until he was worth thirty pounds. He set out in September, rather too late in the year for such an enterprise, for he intended to sleep in the open as much as possible; but his stock was ruined by rain and for three months he lived by his wits—begging, street-singing, assisting other pedlars, suffering privation, yet always avoiding the workhouse. This attempt at saving also failed; for his expectations were not realised; and, by Christmas, he had had enough.

More than a year passed, and Davies submitted a new collection of poems to a reputable firm. He again received an offer to publish at his own expense, the cost of publication to be thirty pounds. An attempt was made by a friend of Davies to interest some philanthropists in the poetry in the hope that they would pay for its publication. The friend's efforts to influence the philanthropists were unsuccessful, though he tried for some months. This disappointment did not diminish Davies'

faith in his work, however, for his desire to achieve poetic fame had now become more than an ambition, it became a passion—almost an obsession; and every act of his life went to further that desire; so that the greater his setbacks the stronger his determination to succeed.

At last, in June 1904, the poet had an idea which was to solve his difficulties. He thought that he might be able to borrow sufficient money, with his legacy as security, to enable him to achieve publication. Therefore he went to see his trustee. Here is his account of the interview:

> " 'It is now June,' he said, 'and if you allow your income to stand until the beginning of the New Year, you will then have ten pounds saved to your account, and I give you my promise to advance another twenty pounds without a question of interest, making the amount thirty pounds!' Now it happened that three weeks before I left London I had sent a work to a printer and publisher, who had priced two hundred and fifty copies at nineteen pounds, so that I knew well that thirty pounds would be ample to meet all expenses. But how was I to live for the next six months?"

He resolved to leave the Farmhouse, the cheap lodging-house where he was then living, and to tramp the country, obtaining his livelihood in whatever way possible, however rough and hard; and he set out with less than three shillings in his pocket. His resolution was upheld by his strong faith in his poetic ability; and he had the shining star of his literary ambition to guide him through the greatest hardships. Under the privations to be suffered and endured, a man less determined to achieve publication and with less faith in his literary powers would have been compelled to abandon the struggle; but Davies was made of stern stuff, with abundance of pluck, tenacity, and perseverance in his character; and he would not allow adverse circumstances to thwart the one great aim of his life—the publication of his poems.

At last, after being often at his wits' end to procure food and shelter, Davies returned to London in December after an absence of five months; and he at once set about composing, revising, and preparing his work for the Press. This was done by the time the New Year came—1905. Of this time, he has written:

> "If I failed in making success, the disappointment would be mine only, and if I succeeded, there would be none other to thank but myself. On receiving this money (£30 from the trustee), in the first week in January, I lost no time in seeing the printer and arranging for an edition of two hundred and fifty copies, the cost to be nineteen pounds. This amount certainly did not cover expenses, and here began the series of kindnesses which, after a few more disappointments, were to follow. . . . In the first week in March I received my first printed copy."

Thus, in the spring of 1905, was published his first book, *The Soul's Destroyer*.

Naturally enough, written when it was, this book contains much that reflects the life and environment of Davies during his days of struggle and hardship; for he wished to reveal, through the medium of poetry, aspects of his own experience and that of others, and he attempted to expose some of the evils of the existing order of society as endured by the ignorant and suffering poor of the slums. Hence, a number of the pieces in *The Soul's Destroyer* are poems of revolt against poverty and intemperance and, by implication, against a society which not only allowed those evils to exist, but tolerated them with complacency; and these poems are based not on theories but

on actual experience—on what he knew. Thus, much of the book is humanitarian in tone, sympathising with homeless men and describing their conditions of existence; and it may be considered, to some extent, as a social document in poetry; whilst there are also some nature poems and love poems which give indications of his later powers in these directions.

In theme, treatment, and length one of the most ambitious pieces Davies was ever to compose, and partly autobiographical, the title poems tells, in three hundred and fifty-nine lines of blank verse, the story of a tragedy caused by the evil of drink—"The Soul's Destroyer."

The poem opens in London, the great city which yet has its foul slums. There the poet had lived for "full five years," having become hopeless, "a wreck of men" who had known intemperance and poverty, but thought that "return to nature might restore youth's early peace and faith's simplicity."

With "sweet remembrance" of his early years, he had often secretly wished to see again one, whose presence had been "a pool of deep repose," a girl friend of his youth, now married to another. So, one morning, awaking befuddled from drunken sleep, with choking tongue and lips gone dry, he thought of his boyhood home

> "and of the purer life,
> Of Nature's air, and having room to breathe,
> A sunny sky, green field, and water's sound;
> Of peaceful rivers not yet fretful grown
> As when their mouths have tasted Ocean's salt;
> And where the rabbits sit amid their ferns,
> Or leap, to flash the white of their brown tails"—

and, with sudden impulse, he resolved to depart from London and to look once more on his friend's face.

Leaving the Borough (Southwark) in safe care of his

> "old cronies, who would keep
> Its reputation from becoming changed
> Into a quiet neighbourhood,"

he walked all day, and that night "lay peaceful down beneath the glorious stars." His journey was delightful with beautiful scenery and in six days he was near home, but his courage failed:

> "I feared to see in life
> Her who was now the heroine of dreams,
> And sweet familiar of my solitude
> And silence, and whose shadowy hand kept full
> The cup of memory; and in such mood
> Entered an inn,"

in search of courage. There he encountered his friend's husband, helplessly and hopelessly drunk, yet suspicious of his wife. The poet says:

> "and well I knew his thoughts,
> And of such demons in a drunkard's dream.
> The sleepless dream that wearies flesh and brain.
> This curse of drink, in village and in town,
> The curse of nations, their decline and fall,

Ere they can question purpose of this life;
And so 'twill be until the mind is reared
To see the beauty that is in the world,
Of science, art, and Nature at all times;
To know that temperance and sobriety
Is truer joy—e'en though the grave ends all—
Than an unnatural merriment that brings
A thousand tortures for its hundred joys."

Accompanying the drunkard to his home, which should have been, with its three little children, a place of joy instead of sorrow, the poet looked again on the sad, resigned face of his childhood friend who "had loved without avail." Hers was "a widowhood in which Death claimed no part," until that night when her drunken husband went mad and died.

That, briefly, is the main theme of the title poem, narrated in blank verse which is for the greater part smooth, well-knit, and surprisingly mature, though suffering occasional lapses into awkwardness. Yet, though "The Soul's Destroyer" deals with a sordid subject, it must not be considered merely as a tract against certain social evils and their attendant train of misery; for it contains happy passages of real poetry, with vivid and appropriate imagery. The descriptions of nature, written from a great love, are very effective, as in the simple lines:

"We went together side by side to school,
Together had our holidays in fields
Made golden by June's buttercups; in woods
Where under ferns fresh pulled I buried her,
And called her forth like Lazarus from the grave;"

or, as in the following more majestic lines:

"I've seen proud Autumn in more gold arrayed,
Ere cold October strips and blows him bare,
Than ever delved from earth or ta'en from water's wash;
More pearls seen scattered to a summer's morn
Than Ocean e'er possessed in depths or out;"

while occasionally he philosophises, as in:

"Sure, thought I, our whole duty is to leave
Our children's state exalted 'bove our own:
Equipping them with kinder thoughts than ours,
And they do likewise in their day; so through
The generations to at last attain
The climax of our mortal purity."

This passage, suggestive of a brief Shakepearean soliloquy, was probably composed under the influence of an intense application to Shakespeare's plays; for Davies had, for some years, been a keen student of English literature, and this first book reveals evidence of a close acquaintance with Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and the Bible.

In addition to "The Soul's Destroyer," the poems entitled "In a Lodging House" (composed five years previously), "Saints and Lodgers," and "The Lodging House Fire" deal with his own immediate experience, acquaintances, and environment. Of these shorter poems, "The Lodging House Fire" is the most important, for it is

a poem of great power, evocative of the deadly atmosphere of the lodging house kitchen. Written by an inmate of the lodging house, it deals with the coke fire of that place, with its "death-dealing glow" and its poisonous fumes and its fascination for the lodgers:

"My birthday—yesterday,
Its hours were twenty-four;
Four hours I lived lukewarm,
And killed a score.

I woke eight times and rose,
Came to our fire below,
Then sat four hours and watched
Its sullen glow. . . .

For listen: it is death
To watch that fire's glow;
For, as it burns more red
Men paler grow.

O better in foul room
That's warm, make life away,
Than homeless out of doors,
Cold night and day. . . .

But all my day is waste,
I live a lukewarm four
And make a red coke fire
Poison the score."

In its stark yet austere simplicity of language, its skilful use of numbers, its mature and efficient technique and sympathetic treatment of theme, this piece may be considered a little masterpiece of meditative poetry. It sounds the two notes of rebellion and frustration: rebellion that such conditions of life exist in a civilised community; frustration, because the poet feels helpless to do anything to set things right; though, within the bounds of poetry, he did his utmost in this book.

In *The Soul's Destroyer*, there are also clear indications of Davies' later strength as a writer of Nature poetry, and this power may be discerned especially in parts of the title poem, in "Lines to a Sparrow," in "Autumn," and in "The Hillside Park," which is a description of Belle Vue Park, Newport, Mon. In these poems he reveals his skill in apt and original description, as when he writes of the sparrow and his depredations:

"What shall we call thee—mouse o' the air,
To raid our buds, make our trees bare,
To rob the sunlight of its grain,
More mischievous than April's rain;
To rob our orchards, and to knock
Young blossoms down, to spoil and pock
Nature's fair face;"

and in one fine, vivid line he tells how autumn "In Summer's castaway is strangely clad"; while in the same poem we also have:

"O now with drowsy June one hour to be!
Scarce waking strength to hear the hum of bees,
Or cattle lowing under shady trees,
Knee deep in waters loitering to the sea."

Among the best of the remaining pieces in the book are a few love poems, a poem on "Sleep," another on "Death," and a rollicking drinking song:

"A Bee goes mumbling homeward pleased,
He has not slaved away his hours;
He's drunken with a thousand healths
Of love and kind regard for flowers.

Pour out the wine
His joy be mine."

Thus, the book possesses plenty of variety; and the poems, except for a few humorous ones, are mostly serious in tone and theme, well written and contain good ideas. Davies obtained his best effects by using simple language and straightforward expression; and he failed generally when he departed from this practice, as in his use of the "poetical" words "margent" and "drave," and in the following extraordinary line from "Beauty's Light": "And leapt them seems that many have."

The book reveals that it was the work of a man earnest, serious-minded, and anxious to better the conditions of existence of his fellow-men; and though it is not quite the epitome of all Davies' later work, yet it contains many direct hints, in manner and material, of what was to follow.

Lawrence W. Hockey.

NOTE.—I have to thank the Newport (Mon.) Museum and Public Libraries' Committee for the privilege of inspecting their first edition of *The Soul's Destroyer*.—L. W. H.

The Olive

SOFTLY, in Umbria's sunlit peace
Or sea-illumined Sicily,
Mid vines and pines or cypresses
Or sisterlike sweet-almond tree—
Softly, in summer's golden glance
Or winter moonlight's icy gleam—
The fairy olive seems to dance,
But dancing to have fallen a-dream,
As in an inward ecstasy.

Her music is of sun or star
In varied rhythm of nights and days;
The silvery voices near and far
Break not her little-varying praise;
The cricket in the sultry noon,
The tree-frog in the hours of dew,
The nightingale beneath the moon,
Or fluting of the lonely chiù—
Blend with her tranquil harmony.

So lightly poised in shade or sun,
More like a spirit than a tree,
Or ghost of some grey-vestured nun,
She tells her message unto me;
That spite of drought and frost and hail,
The biting axe and tearing gale,
She finds in service past her seeing
Sufficient reason for her being
And her entire felicity.

Harold Goad.

More Comments on G. M. Hopkins

I MUST begin with an apology. It is usual to follow the calendar and attend punctually to the needs of an important anniversary. This is as it should be, and Mr. Harding has been more prompt than I; his article on Hopkins was included in the number of March 1944. (Dr. Gardner has been equally prompt with his publication of Volume I of a *Centenary Commemoration*, and a review of his book appears at the end of these comments.) But this present year will be well under way and poetry-lovers will have consolidated their opinions before these words are through the press and between the covers of THE POETRY REVIEW.

First of all, the life: the scaffolding of events which surrounds his character and thought. Born at Stratford (Essex) in 1844, the eldest son in a family of eight, Gerard Manley Hopkins was educated at the Grammar School at Highgate and in 1863 won a scholarship to Oxford, where he took a First in Greats in 1867. But the idea of God was already compelling his mind and heart, and in 1866 he wrote to Newman: "I do not," he says, "want to be helped to any conclusion of belief. . . . I am thankful to say my mind is made up. . . ." What he asks is help to resolve the "painful confusion of mind about my immediate duty in my circumstances." For his family were of the Church of England, and it was against their wish and influence that he joined the Jesuits. Newman used neither command nor persuasion. He gave Hopkins his patient and interested attention. He helped and advised him, and Hopkins took his first vows in 1868. He was only one of many whose fervour was heightened by the prevailing mood in Oxford as a whole.

At first his time was divided between Roehampton and Stoneyhurst and Wales: seven years in which he was occupied with the studies of the Jesuit curriculum. This was followed by parish work in London, Chesterfield, Oxford, Lancashire, and Glasgow. All these, except Oxford, he found sordid and oppressive to both mind and spirit. Finally he was Professor of Greek at the University of Dublin from 1884 until his death in 1889. His first verses were written at school, at the age of fifteen. His friendship with Bridges began at Oxford, and Hopkins' first letter to Bridges is dated August 28, 1865. The collected poems were published posthumously by Bridges in 1918. (Bridges had previously introduced certain of the poems in anthologies and in *The Spirit of Man*.)

His life is not remarkable for events. It makes no colourful biography. The adventures are adventures of the mind, the problems nervous and spiritual rather than emotional. But they make fascinating study. So much so that my notes are far too numerous and have far outgrown my powers of consolidation. For details see his letters, his notebrooks; for a programme note on the poems, turn to a separate article. This article can be no more than a commentary and a considered opinion on a man whose position in English literature is still undecided and whose character and writings are still matter for controversy.

It was "The Wreck of the Deutchland" which made certain to himself his inspiration and was later to be the cornerstone of his reputation: though at the time Bridges found it difficult and the Jesuit paper *The Month* had not the courage to take it. (There had been "early" poetry, certainly; poems written at school and at Oxford, experiments with rhythm and metre. But the majority of these he burnt when he joined the Jesuits, as being incompatible with his purpose and calling, "and was resolved to write no more, as not belonging to my profession, unless it were by the wish of my

superiors.") It was on a hint from a superior that he allowed his mind to focus on this particular catastrophe as subject-matter for a poem. "The Wreck of the Deutchland" was produced after seven years of silence, and this shows both in the fashioning and the fabric of it. The bewilderment and anguish, the sharpness and ecstacy of the spiritual experience of those years had not been spent as they came, in short poetic flights, pricked by the spur of the moment; this he had not allowed; they had been put by for a future outlay which he may or may not have foreseen. I fancy, not foreseen; for while the structure is unique and the expression sometimes forced, the thought and inspiration is neither self-conscious nor premeditated. Rhythm and metre, on the other hand, are matters which he has considered much and on which he eventually theorises with deliberation and much argument; and in the "Deutchland" he not only practises what he preaches about rhyme but carries out his ideas on sprung rhythm. These things he enlarges upon in his correspondence with Bridges, and those who wish for detail and elucidation should seek it there.

"The Wreck of the Deutchland" is the most important poem, but not necessarily the first one to read; in fact, Bridges advises against doing this. Instead, turn the pages first as you would with an anthology, and read those poems which catch your eye and your mind. Read "Pied Beauty," and "Spring and Fall"; read "Moonrise" and the fragment on the cuckoo's song, and "Winter with the Gulf Stream." Read the Hurrahing sonnet. And then turn to "Heraclitan Fire," and speculate on what that sonnet would have been if the theme had been as urgent as the opening words. Notice, too, how it contains all his qualities and faults: the vivid descriptive metaphor of the opening lines, the awkward reconciliation of description and moral; the influence of Welsh *Cynghanedd*, the strained and artificial rhyme of the last lines. Read the hymn "Nondum" which is included among the poems in the Appendix. "Verily thou art a God that hidest Thyself." It is as much a clue to experience as Abelard's hymns, written, after long silence, for Heloise. It was written in 1866: the forerunner of the "terrible" sonnets which came twenty years later. And then read those sonnets, "written in blood"; written in Dublin in 1885.

More and more as you read are you teased not by his difficulties of utterance, but the thought of what might have been.

> "When drop-of-blood-and-foam dapple
> Bloom lights the orchard-apple,
> And thicket and thorp are merry
> With silver-surfed cherry.
>
> And azuring-over greybell makes
> Wood banks and brakes wash wet like lakes,
> And magic cuckoo-call
> Caps, clears and clinches all."

There is the promise of the early poetry and the vital and sensuous appreciation of cloud and colour, of all things seen and heard; the fresh and controlled and vivid utterance of "May Magnificat" (quoted above); the extravagence and exaltation of the Hurrahing sonnet, the mastery of the "Deutchland," and an Epithalamion, unfinished because its mood and meaning could not be reconciled with his professed views. And then the years of experiment, when words were bent and strained to fit his theories, and his crowded utterance grew more and more complex; and then

the sudden and desperate and unwilling appearance of three sonnets, where the accumulated discord which he had housed for seven years broke in an anguish of spirit more complete, more complex, more drastic and more overwhelming than he could ever have guessed or foreseen. All this should have led to something more. Why did it not?

"Comfort the flesh and set the spirit free." It is pertinent here to think about Donne, to study the face of the man, the high forehead, the sensitive brow, the dark eyes, the finedrawn features, the sensual lips: the face of a passionate scholar, swift and fervent in thought and action, a man of the world who has looked ahead and known God. "For Godsake hold your tongue and let me love. . . ."; and having known love, he has put it behind him and turned to God with a fervour which he once gave to the woman who compelled his heart and mind and body and soul. They were not all satisfactions of the flesh, where mind and spirit stood aside and watched. He knew what it was for all things to fuse and become eternal.

Hopkins never gave himself the chance to know this. The horror of ugliness made him put a constant vigilance on those senses which might betray him. He never dared to put the matter to the test, and I suggest that he had less inclination than Donne, than most men, and that it was not this which set him at odds with himself. But in place of Donne's sensualism was his own unusually keen and nervous appreciation of beauty, beauty in nature; a swift and sensuous response. It was this which woke his mind to poetry. It was this inspiration which he could not accept and could not reconcile.

Now psychology and experience tells us that a problem made out of clash of contradictory emotion can only be solved by daring to acknowledge its core. We cannot hide our heads in the sand and shut out the sight of whatever it may be that we do not care to look into. Whether it be character or emotion or circumstance or a situation which time will eventually bring, it must be looked into, and looked into deeply; the results may be surprising; our outlook may change; our happiness may go or become absolute; but only so can the truth emerge and the problem be resolved. Now Beauty is a pagan wench; and not always associated with the idea of God. And this Hopkins knew, or half-knew, and would not admit. This was true for him and his poetry as much as his religion was true. And because this went contrary to his organised notions of what life and religion and beauty and literature should be, and because he saw the danger in it to these things, he pushed it away and pretended it was not so and refused to look the matter in the face. And so the quarrel went on.

Suppose he had said to himself "There are two things; they are incompatible; they both matter"; then eventually there might have come the knowledge "*This* matters; beside it, all else is nothing." and on that basis he could have built his life. Say for the sake of argument that religion had become supreme; then so sure would he have been in his sympathy with God, so absolute would have been his certainty, that he would never again have had to worry about the roots from which his poetry came. It would have been a friend in the house: instead of a quarrelsome neighbour, a continual nattering at the door.

His was not a case of split personality; nor was it merely a clash, a quarrel between poetical and vocational obligations. It was this, certainly; and he made a conscious

effort to bring the two things together in poems on the martyrs: on Margaret Clitheroe, and St. Winefred, and St. Thomas Aquinas. But, as I have said, it was more than this. Inspiration came first through a vivid and visual appreciation of beauty. To say that inspiration was enriched and given precision by his religious fervour would be easy, but it seems to me untrue; though I have heard this opinion put forward. (The only poem which is swept and coloured by passionate religious experience is the Hurrahing sonnet.) It is true only in the sense that a poem, and particularly a sonnet, must have a single inspiration and spring from a central theme. It is not enough for it to have a compelling opening line and a satisfactory conclusion. For example, "Heraclitan Fire" has the first of these; in it his technique and language have both strength and resource, and he has mastered and made flexible the difficult six-syllabled line. His descriptive inspiration could not be better. But it lacks unity. He has gone a long way from the days of the Hurrahing sonnet.

"The only poem which is swept and coloured by passionate religious experience is the Hurrahing sonnet." Is this what his poetry might have been, if he had not deliberately driven a wedge between the making of poetry and the service of God? if the problem (which at first he did not realise) had been faced and solved?

I will give Mr. Abbott's comment in his introduction to the letters. He had in mind certain of the poems, but his remark applies suitably to nearly all: "The yeast of the religious spirit has not worked through them." I quote them because there can be no better conclusion.

Finally, another question: "He who has once been happy is for aye Out of destructions reach." He had not and he was not. Might he have been? It is a nice problem.

N.B.—I have spoken of "passionate religious experience," and I may be challenged for using words loosely. In current usage, the word "passionate" is concerned solely with human emotion: that state when the mind is driven or overwhelmed by a particular need. Its meaning has gone from the general to the particular. I have used the word in the general sense. The mind is still driven or overwhelmed, but not by the particular need of sex and/or that wider emotion love. I leave it to the Freudians to prolong the discussion.

* * * * *

I made the mistake of not beginning this review of W. H. Gardner's "STUDY OF POETIC IDIOSYNCRACY IN RELATION TO POETIC TRADITION" while my mind was still quickened by astonishment and indignation. Because now I am so blunted by the book's vastness and stupidity, that it is difficult to say anything at all—astonishment, that such extraordinary statements could be put forward by a man who is evidently a scholar; indignation, that such a vast amount of time and energy should have been spent to so little purpose.

Opening the book at random I read the following statement, a comment on an excerpt from one of Rilke's sonnets:

> "Beginning with the close vowels of 'Ist' and 'Hiesiger' (to signify, perhaps, the restricted life of the living), the quatrain opens out into a duet between the diphthong *ei* and the vowel *u* (the two realms Life and Death?), with the binding obbligato of the alliterative *w* (the continuity of the Orpheans poet's consciousness in both realms?)."

This was bad enough; in itself enough to give me a profound mistrust for Mr. Gardner's judgment and understanding. But I found other things: that Eliot had been influenced by Gertrude Stein, that Stanza 32 of the Eurydice was a "significant paraphrase" from Job xxxviii. 8 11 (Mr. Gardner quotes both, and there is neither affinity nor resemblance). Were there space enough, I would quote his page of nonsense as a significant warning.

I then settled down to a systematic reading: a wearisome task, because the book is stuffed with redundancy.

Mr. Gardner makes no mistakes of fact. He has a thorough knowledge of the Letters and Notebooks; he quotes from them continually and accurately and gives chapter and verse for all his quotations. He has read widely and gives the habitat of all his references. Nothing has been missed that could possibly apply to or illuminate the problem of Hopkins. Nevertheless, this book provokes my strongest condemnation. Mr. Gardner has no understanding of the working of the poetic mind; and it is this, despite his prolonged and conscientious labour, which makes the book a failure. Collateral to this over-riding weakness, are other faults. For although the book has been ten years a-growing, Mr. Gardner has not assimilated his material. He has brought no imagination to bear on his accumulated facts and opinions; nor has he sifted the good from the bad, the necessary from the irrelevant. Irrelevance is an excellent thing only if it is touched off by the imagination; with Mr. Gardner this is not so. He has given us everything, without discrimination. This fault could have been made a virtue if his facts and quoted opinions had been presented more systematically; had he done this he might have written a valuable work of reference; as it is, his book is like an overcrowded desk, whose order is apparent only to the eye of the owner.

Set-off against these things is his immense though misplaced knowledge, his gathering together of previous criticism, and his valuable analysis of the Notebooks for the "process of condensation and refining" from which Hopkins' imagery is made. He was working on the right lines here.

This book is dangerous: because the very quantity of Mr. Gardner's knowledge will be sufficient to impress all those (like himself) whose poetic understanding is small or undeveloped. It is tedious, pedantic, laboured, and precious, and a disappointing Centenary Commemoration. *M. D. Hastings.*

Sunset Scene in Wartime

THE sun, a watchfire quickening in the West;
A mull of storm-cloud, soaked to bloody red
In sundown passion, furling into rest;
The wandering earth, a stabbed thing, mute with dread.

And by the torment of an ebbing tide
Riven of grief, a girl too tensely caught
'Twixt love and love, where men's hot passions ride
And war guns flame, and life presages naught. *M. E. Millen.*

Bolton Abbey, May 30th, 1942

(for J. T., P. F., and L. B.)

THEY who built, built for delight and use,
But we who see, see for delight alone.
There'll be no more forgetting while we live
This ecstasy of stone.

These lyric columns poised in moon-rise mist,
These yearning arches, tensile filigree
Moulding the night's segmented loveliness;
The soft expectancy

Of creeping light upon the pallid grass;
The confidence of curves, the shadow's length,
The dark and deep-embedded buttress's
Determinative strength,

Are bound for ever in a hoop of dream,
Are ours for ever who the same dream know;
For us the river passes and the bat goes by,
And the same winds blow.

(Died on War Service, 1944.) *Leslie Birley Brooks.*

"On Being Blinded"

IF I should fail and see my failure writ
In broken plans that strew the path behind,
Shall I in sadness and for shame of it
To black despair be evermore resigned,
Or with one valient effort turn me round
To win anew the late surrendered ground?

If I should strive and think my striving vain,
Since after sowing long I fail to reap,
Shall I sit down to nurse the numbing pain
And hope to find forgetfulness in sleep,
Or shall I strive again with added zest
And put my manhood to another test?

If I shall hope and find my hope betrayed,
With all my life's ambitions come to nought,
Shall I chide God that He such havoc made,
And in a flood of faithlessness be caught,
Or shall I praise Him that my hope survives,
Since He bestows where unkind fate deprives?

Maurice Little.

Written by the late Lt. Maurice Little of the Australian Expeditionary Force after he was wounded and *blinded in both eyes* at Gallipoli in the last war.

Tale to the Firelight

TELL your tale to the firelight as children do:
Really there is no one else to tell it to
Since I went down the green valley by the sycamore
And you watcht and waved your hand to me from the cottage door,
And I paused at the mill corner to wave back to you.

"Soap-Suds" was for Monday, if I remember right,
And we used to chaff about the bath upon "Communion Night";
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, were just days between—
Market, baking, gardening, bees, as it may have been—
And sunlight, twilight, firelight and, crossed by the window-bars, moonlight.

The seasons must have fallen in succession, I suppose,
Though now they crowd upon me in an order Goodness knows!
There's blue and white for April, and your apron's on the line,
You are laughing as it dances with a shirt of mine—
Yes, still blue of the Madonna, still Virgin of the Snows.

Yes, I called your eyes the windows through which I read the sky;
I used to lean and plumb the depth of blue to prophesy
That after years of plenty would come long years of dearth
With War and Tribulation to stalk the hungry Earth:
"But never mind, my dear," I'd say, "we'll let the years roll by!"

"No, no," I hear you answer, "and that we never shall!"
And your finger met the shadow of the gnomon on the dial:
The mignonette, the lavender, the quivering scented air,
The shadow on the sunny face, the finger pointing there:
"No, no," I hear you answer, "and that we never shall!"

The shadow of the gnomon—I remember how it stood
To my imagination for the hill beyond the wood
Which fell aslant the setting sun of a brief Winter's day
And told us "Time for tea, children, and put your toys away,"
And the cottage spread its wings like a bird about her brood.

Ah, warm my dear—how brittle-black the gaunt spars of the trees!
They seem as though they must dissolve if once they should unfreeze.
The shadow of the lattice falls in criss-cross on the bed,
Like a screen before the altar where the wine of life is shed,
And flesh and blood are sweet—how sweet! yet hold eternities.

I used to think if we who paid the piper called the tune,
Life should not live for ever, but would dream away in June
Among the dragons of the lily-pond, with flash of wing and fin,
With your laughter like cool leafiness, and a pool to wonder in—
But our lines were graven round the cup, could we have read the rune.

It may be, had we stayed to con the meaning of the sign,
There would have been no sacrament, no sacring of the wine:
We should have whispered each to each of what we knew in part—
The Loveliness, the Dreadfulness, the Hosting of the Heart—
And turned like cheated worshippers and stolen from the shrine.

But the eyes of a young man dazzle when he remembers him:
The sheen, the knit of muscle, the sweep and swing of limb,—
And he pours the eager wine, and brimful fills the cup,
And he looks upon the lightnings as he lifts the chalice up
And hears the threefold Sanctus of the splendid Seraphim.

I've wondered why the Psalmist wrote of going forth with tears—
How should a young man weep while his flame of manhood cheers?
But westward returning with his futility of sheaves—
Ah! then the way has mastery, and then the tired heart grieves
For the nothing worth returning to with the harvest of the years.

I see you in the gold-dust of a later harvest sun,
The shadows reach across the lawn, the dahlias' hour is done;
Your lap is full of apples, my hand is on your knee,
And I am wondering, wondering how it might come to me
With the last word said, the last light shed, and the last thread spun.

Your eyes gaze on for ever like twin adventuring ships,
I fear the hunger in your face, the strange smile on your lips:
The soul looks out on Loneliness and sees in dull amaze
The desert of a pilgrimage through arid sands of days,
And my hand trembles at your knee, and at my heart fear grips.

Must dreams live on for ever, with memory for flail,
Goaded through leagues of loneliness where Love shall not prevail,

Or in the End and the Beginning, beyond Time's lisp of
speech,
Two souls be drawn together whom the voice of Love will
teach
The Loveliness, the Holiness, the one, the only Grail?

It may be, it must be, but I am weary, knowing naught;
Only I wonder sometimes if the ghost of me in thought
Comes to you in the firelight and kneels beside your chair
To tell of going-forth in joy when all the world was fair,
Before the lines were gathered and the rune of Life was
taught.

How unintelligible this tale—if tale it be—must seem
To whom the sunflower and the hollyhock are things to grow,
not dream;
To whom the cadent rhythm in the year's fulfilment brings
Not memories, not tears—even the tears of things—
But change of topic, diet, domicile, *régime!*

"This tale," said I? Well, dear, you know, and better none
than you,
But tell it to the firelight as we children used to do,
And make the shutters fast lest the criss-cross of the bars
Should lead you from the firelight to look beyond the stars—
And there's nothing worth returning to, my dear.

Hubert Riley.

Alpha and Omega

IN the beginning—
Ere day was, or night
Or any light;
Before the stars and planetary spheres
Were taught their orbit's laudatory rhyme,
Ere time
Began its endless rhythmic beat,
Above the formless void, the Spirit, fleet,
In pensive mystery brooded.

In the beginning—
The Word—Let there be light!
Let there be day, and dusk, and night!
And let the Stars of Morning hymn
For joy! Let seas that boundless brim
Flee, that a day-blind Earth may fling
Strong limb and breast to Me!

In what endizzying whirl-pools did those seas
Sink to their new-formed couches, mountains toss
Naked their nipples to the staring sky,
And, from four compass-points, for ecstasy
The wild winds whirl—in pattern of a Cross.

Granite masses trembling like the wind-stirred leaf;
Heaping of the strata'd rocks to heights beyond belief;
New-built mountains crumbling to a powdering of soil
'Neath the rain of sky-flung boulders where the gaping craters boil.

Bloodshot, volcanic eyes
Leer at the lurid skies,
Witness the sun first rise
Out of a trembling sea.

And life and time began, and Adam stood,
A poem of pristine chastity,
Perfection, immortality:
And love-pain smote the heart of God
When He saw His work was good.

Midnight at noon,—
The fearful light
Hides in the skirts of night
For fright!
Amazed—
Earth rocks, and in convulsions raves,
And unlocked graves
Cowed prisoners be-toss,
Who, dazed, and horrified,
Strain fleshless arms up to Golgotha's Hill
In pattern of —a Cross!

Stolid mountains trembling at the God-man's cry;
Darkness over all the earth to veil His agony;
Quaking of the world for shame, while beasts prostrated hide;
Rending of the Temple veil at the rending of His side.

Closing of God's own eyes;
Opening Paradise,
Man's gift—from death to rise;
Man's sin atoned.

And, anguished eyes on Him Who hung above
Stood one of spotless chastity,
Immaculateness, purity.
And seven swords pierced her Maiden's heart
When she knew the Word was—Love.

Cometh the ending,
When day shall end the night.
In light
Shall dark be drowned.
Then shall the Stars of Morning sing
A grander hymn, each living thing
In sudden hope be found.
Cometh the ending,
When grief be lost in joy,
And tongues employ
Eternity in lauding rhyme
To Him Who made—and banished—time.

Winds ecstatic piling up the golden clouds,
God-commanded tombs disgorging startled crowds;
Meeting of a myriad saints and martyrs, angel-led;
Angry oceans vomiting their daylight-blinded dead.

Blast of the trumpet shrill
Strikes all creation still,
Trembling, anticipant, till
Rises the awful Judge.

All mysteries shall then be understood,
And, contemplating purity,
In sinlessness, security,
Joy-pain shall smite the heart of man
At the proof that God is Good.

Ethel Walter.

Gnat

HERE runs the grayling gnat,
Dipping his finger
Where the rush moons
And the lily buds linger.

He's like a lad, a lark
Frisking and glancing,
Warm, small physique to lend
Lust to his dancing.

Seek not the gnat; alack,
For with him revel
Ghost, mist and anchorite,
Ogre and devil;

Phantom and leprechaun,
Elf, witch and shade
Flirt, leap and flaunt with him,
Flourish and fade.

Gnat's an enchanter.
Beware of his art,
Who can compel and lay
Fear in your heart!

Rest your delight in
A song or a rose—
These will true comrades be,
Every man knows.

Jean Kenward.

Lord Lonsdale

LORD of the moorland and the fell,
Of lake and tarn and scree,
Cumberland bids Hail and Farewell,
Now the dust covers thee.

A little dust, a little earth,
Are what remains of thee,
To whom all Westmorland was mirth,
And the hills revelry.

The circus dust, the stadium's dust,
The dust of turf and ring,
Yielded thee once, as the dust must,
Palms to a lord and king.

Now for thy dust thy gaunt domain,
Thy moorland bare and wide,
Blossoms, in tears of mist and rain,
With palms this Eastertide.

T. E. Casson.

Song of the Land Girl

LOVE treads the long path
Through the whispering wheat,
Love smiles as he comes
On his gold-sandalled feet,
While his bearing enhances
This summer-blessed morn
More than noon could emblazon
Its glow on the corn.
He comes, ah he comes
With a light on his brow,
The wheat-whispers quicken
So close is he now.
Then he turns for the heights
From the vale where the breeze
Sets ashudder the corn
That is tall as my knees,
He spurns the rich vale
For the heights dark above—
And the wheat-whispers weaken
To sighs for lost Love.

Evelyn Lloyd.

Death of an Old Lady

TO that cool strand where all life's twilights meet
She is now gone, where no rough tempest blows,
Into a silence utter and complete,
Lovely as light upon unsullied snows.
All things turn home at evening, when fierce Day
Casts down his prides, like children's broken toys,
And Dusk, the ultimate, steals with the grey
Dews of compassion. Deeper than the joys
That fire youth's heart is this proud peace, more calm
Than windless skies, when Night's first sumptuous star
Hangs in the silence. Here Death comes as balm,
With no dark dreads to terrify or mar
Her quiet going. Now she's part of morn
And those still hours, all silvered o'er with sleep,
Of unheard harmonies that herald dawn,
Of rest most rich, because for words too deep.
She is beyond Life's justice or its wrongs,
Lost in that hush that comprehends all songs.

J. E. Winbolt.

Spring Winds

LIKE winds with each returning month comes round,
Are they old tempests in quiescent moods,
Or, like the flowers that greet them from the ground,
Children of local woods and solitudes,
Or as migrating birds, from spaces vast
Stored with the scents of Araby and Ind,
That rest upon a northern tree at last
Where swelling buds invite the wearied wind?
Are they eternal airs that, long ago,
Piped to the Saurians through the cycad trees;
That saw forgotten rivers rise and flow
And raised the vanished waves of shipless seas,
Or, born within a county and a day
Ephemeral as mayflies on the river—
A breath that whispers and then fades away,
Gone from the world for ever and for ever?
Maybe they carry in their ageless breath
Memories of Homer, of Ulysses wise,
Or flew from Eden at the touch of death
To wander since in search of Paradise.
Perhaps they blew by Calvary; and fled
Seeing apparent triumph of the wrong,

And sought the sands and cities of the dead,
Their tragedies all woven into song.
For song and singer too are they. They flow—
Wide rivers of the air, through every clime.
Their ways mysterious as the spirit's blow,
And clear the dusty corridors of Time.
They have sunk ships and levelled many towers,
And foamed the seas, for none can govern them;
But now they come again through sunny hours
To move the fragile snowdrop on its stem.

G. E. Mullins.

Words Without Song

WRITE a Petrarchan sonnet? You who ask
This trifle must a poet be, or bard.
None but the honest poet knows how hard
And rigid are the rules of such a task.
This being so, I'll not attempt to mask
My failings. I will boldly lay my card
Upon the table—so your stern regard
Shall send me to my Muse—or to my flask . . .
And yet, observe, the rhyme thus far is good;
An even, steady rhythm do I keep:
Five feet a line, and fourteen lines the whole.
But still, this sonnet does not what it should.
Methink if Petrarch read it, he would weep—
It wears his form, but mirrors not his soul.

Cassandra Page-Turner.

Gnostic

ALL of life in a quiet hour,
And, mandragora root.
Who would expect so fair a flower
to have so bitter fruit?

Sleep at last in a rosy glow,
when Love's dawn paled to cream.
And—it was not so long ago—
I had a lovely dream.

But oh, to sleep a dreamless sleep,
or unremembering wake,
and know not any need to weep
in dreams, for a dream's sake.

W. H. Dennett-Morgan.

The Braver Battle

BECAUSE a world grew bleak of spirit
And men renounced unworldly creeds
And wealth became a badge of merit
And weapons sprang from dragon-seeds,

Because we let ourselves be creatures
Of conscienceless security,
And let the earth's uncandled features
Obscure in us the visionary,

Because all self in self grew centred
And man in man sought benefit,
Each soul a room where no light entered
With only lies to furnish it:

Since profit shackled inspiration
And cold precision took its place,
While nation seeks to throttle nation
The seal of doom is on our race.

To tame the beast who came unbidden
And measures men by a length of rope,
Who tortures children hunger-ridden
Because of the tongue their parents spoke,

Our youth once more we must deflower,
Break off the bough which bears the fruit,
While in our veins the sap turns sour—
Yet lay the blight not at the root?

They lightly talk of acceptable losses
Who nightly send on an eyeless quest
Young men, brave men whom Moloch tosses
As blazing torches to sudden death!

War fosters more than front-line losses,
All do not die by a dose of lead,
Some dance in typhus-infested dosses
And sleep in beds death-tenanted. . .

Sullen, humourless and hounded
By threat and goad to plunder, kill,
Fed by the flame of lust unbounded
To wreak their fear-inspired will,

The Nazis fight like cornered cattle
Against amassed material odds,
But we must wage incessant battle
To earn the good will of the gods.

Eric Peters.

Journey

THE shaking sunlight quivers on his face
By sleep designed and wrought
Without the rippled surfaces of thought,
And patterns it with lace.

His lips th' eternal quiet of marble keep;
And eyelids curved, and skin
With heat rose-moistened, glisten: throat and chin
Are sculptured, carved in sleep.

Strong lips in that dark face, cut in repose
Endure untutored: die
Without the consolation of a cry
His future could oppose.

So, sleeping, stuff of honour, muscle, brain—
A tired soldier sleeping in the train.

Margaret Howarth.

Germania

THEY are not dead, the great of Germany;
They sleep—and dream—beneath the bloody pall
Their country weaves. Do you not hear them cry:
All's blent once more in Being's Crucible!
Do you not smell the fumes? Wrong's stirred to right;
Chaos to course, and black midnight to noon.
The finite's churned toward the Infinite,
And we, by demons conjured, are the spoon.

Ruth Tenney Wolfers.

Reflections at Table

THERE is a grace that makes bread flesh
And crocks with gold to shine;
There is a round satiety
That makes of water wine.

But he who cuts the barley loaf
Craves wine nor gold of kings
To confound the lovely dignity
That dwells with common things,

For here a dual comeliness
Makes cup and cloth divine:
O smile on me, beloved one,
For you are bread and wine!

Chloris Heaton Ross.

True Thomas

O I maun live my lee lone,
My lee lone, my lee lone,
O I maun live my lee lone
That hae kissed a Queen o' ferlie.

O ither chiels hae sonsie wives
And ither chiels hae bonny bairns,
But at my elbow aye there glowers
A wee black deil wi' twa lang hairns,

And I maun live my lee lone,
My lee lone, my lee lone,
O I maun live my lee lone
That hae kissed a Queen o' ferlie.

And I maun tak the bonny road
That winds about the fernie brae,
And back the road to far Elfland
It's soon, gey soon again I'll gae,

For I maun live my lee lone,
My lee lone, my lee lone,
O I maun live my lee lone
That hae kissed a Queen o' ferlie,

I spier at ither's sonsie wives,
I spier at ither's bonny bairns,
But he 'minds me wi' a fearfa' nip,
The black wee deil wi' the lang hairns,

That I maun live my lee lone,
My lee lone, my lee lone,
O I maun live my lee lone
That hae kissed a Queen o' ferlie.

O she was bonny as the Spring
As she rade roun' the brae to me,
Ane look and a' the birdies sing
That perch sae high on the Eildon Tree,

But I maun live my lee lone,
My lee lone, my lee lone,
O I maun live my lee lone
That hae kissed a Queen o' ferlie.

Betide me weal, betide me woe,
I said, nor did it daunten me,
And syne I kissed her rosy lips
All underneath the Eildon Tree,

So I maun live my lee lone,
My lee lone, my lee lone,
O I maun live my lee lone
That hae kissed a Queen o' ferlie.

O I'll ride on—through mirk, mirk night,
And I'll wade red rivers aboon the knee,
(Nae sun, nae moon, nor ae star's light
But aye the roaring o' the sea!)

And I maun dree my ain weird,
My ain weird, my ain weird,
O I maun dree my ain weird
That hae kissed a Queen o' ferlie.

And its waes me for the eerie road
That winds about yon bogle brae—
But its waes me mair for fair Elfland
And I to-night that road maun gae,

For I canna live my lee lone,
My lee lone, my lee lone,
O I canna live my lee lone
Wha hae kissed a Queen o' ferlie!*

T. M. Auld.

* Ferlie = wonder.

Valedictory

To the memory of Laurence Binyon, Stephen Haggard, Alun Lewis, Keith Douglas, Richard Spender, William Soutar, Sydney Keyes, Stephen Vincent Benet, Cale Young Rice.

OF all the fated company who passed
This year, nine poets died—nine natural kings
Who had transfixed the flash of rainbow wings,
And felt a wild heart beat, and held it fast.
They gathered the old wonder, breathed into
It modern virtue they alone could lend,
And went down into darkness, to the end
Singing the primal beauty that they knew.

What does it matter if some had grown old,
Dim-eyed and wistful in the quest for truth,
While others gave their hot blood and their youth
So that the epic splendid might be told?
Salute, astronomers who find, afar,
Gleaming and glowing, a new nine-pointed star!

Madeleine Wrenne Jarman.

The Real Southey

GRETA HALL! These words conjure up for us a whole galaxy of the great names in English literature. Apart from the two poets who lived there, Samuel Taylor Coleridge from 1800–1803 and Robert Southey from 1803–1843, among those who at different times during these forty years visited the house were, to mention only a few: Walter Savage Landor, William Wordsworth, John Keats, Lord Byron, Dr. Thomas Arnold, Sir Walter Scott, John Ruskin, William Hazlitt, Charles and Mary Lamb, John Stuart Mill, and William Wilberforce.

It was at Greta Hall during the Centenary Celebrations of "the greatest Man" of all his contemporaries, Robert Southey, that I first met Mr. Jack Simmons, author of the new *Southey* (Collins, 12s. 6d.), the only important biography of modern times, with the exception of Professor Haller's study of the poet's early life and poetry published in 1919.

In Mr. Simmons' *Southey* we have the first full-length portrait of one who is usually the last to be named of the group of Lake Poets. Wordsworth and Coleridge are read and even admired in these chaotic days, though they are often scorned by the "moderns." In Southey's own time his poems received high praise from many, Scott thought highly of them and especial praise was given to them by Coleridge and Walter Savage Landor, by Carlyle and Cardinal Newman. Newman wrote in 1850, " 'Thalaba' has ever been to my feelings the most sublime of English poems, I don't know Spenser—I mean morally sublime. The versification of 'Thalaba' is most melodious, too. Many persons will not perceive that they are reading blank verse." But in our own day Southey's long poems are seldom read, and indeed to many they seem but pictures of ". . . people of the realm of dream . . . terrible, strange, sublime, and beauteous shapes"; yet Southey's shorter lyrics are read again and again, and two or three of these, "My Days among the Dead are Past," "The Holly Tree," and "The Battle of Blenheim" appear in the more important anthologies. Some of the ballads put him in the front rank; they show a genuine poetic impulse together with an emotion which is true and sustained; they are masterpieces of the grotesque.

One evening of the Centenary at Keswick was given to a reading of Southey's poetry. The Reverend Maurice H. FitzGerald, Canon Residentiary of Bristol, the greatest living authority on Southey and editor of the Oxford edition of the *Poems* (1909), a *Selection of the Letters* (World's Classics 1912), the *Life of John Wesley* (1925), and *The Doctor* (1930), read a selection from the longer works: "Thalaba," "The Curse of Kehama," and "Roderick." My own choice was made from among the shorter lyrics, and included "Little Book in Green and Gold," "The Cataract at Lodore," "Funeral Song of the Princess Charlotte of Wales," "My Days among the Dead are Past," and "The Battle of Blenheim." Whatever the critics have to decry in Southey's verse, that evening (to judge by what one heard afterwards) the large audience enjoyed and appreciated the poems read. One of the audience told me that until now she had never realised the true value of "The Battle of Blenheim." This poem has long been looked upon as just another of those pieces so often forced upon children in the schoolroom, and forced upon them in such a way, without any attempt at explanation either of the words or of the meaning, that they leave instead of a love for, and an appreciation of, poetry, either an intense dislike of it or an entirely indifferent attitude to its approach. "The Battle of Blenheim" is more than a school-

room piece, it is a poem of powerful sarcasm emphasising the wickedness and futility of war, and as such has been included in The Poetry Society's verse-speaking test pieces.

Professor Dowden considers Southey's minor poetry gives admirable expression to that poetry of sober feeling so seldom found in lyric verse. One is reluctantly forced, however, on the whole, to have to agree with Mr. Simmons when he says that "Southey's poetry has no magic; it does not sing." But if Southey has not taught any new truth, nor given us any new metres, he has left to English literature the beauty and purity of an untarnished pen; a pen too seldom met with to-day, when so many writers go much beyond calling a spade a spade, often writing with pens that seem to have been dipped in very smudgy ink and badly in need of an old-fashioned pen-wiper.

Being a collateral descendant of Robert Southey (my paternal great-grandmother and the poet were first cousins) and having enjoyed the privilege of living for four days among a company of distinguished men and women who had come together from all parts of England to keep his centenary in his beautiful Lakeland home; having slept in Coleridge's study, having walked with Southey's memory to Crosthwaite Church, and in memory played with his children and with the children of Wordsworth and Coleridge in their garden under the shadow of Skiddaw, it was with more than ordinary interest and with mind a-tip-toe for more information that I opened Mr. Simmons long-awaited volume. It is a splendid and very welcome contribution to the literature of the Lake Poets; there is not a dull nor uninteresting page in the whole book. There is, however, a very obvious misprint on page 133, where in line fifteen Mrs. Southey's income is estimated at £105 a year—this, of course, should read Mrs. Coleridge's income.

Mr. Simmons regards Southey as an important and admirable writer, and one whose works are seriously undervalued to-day, and he gives us his reason for this estimate in the last chapter of this vital and arresting book. "Why is it," asks Mr. Simmons, "that a writer who commands a style of such remarkable range and flexibility is so little thought of to-day? There is a simple answer to that question: the intimidating bulk of his work. Nothing but a general selection from the entire range of his books can establish him in the high place he deserves to hold. Such a selection, competently made, would show him for a great master of English narrative and descriptive prose. As it is, his large works are seldom read, and their merits are underestimated in consequence." Among modern critics it would seem that Mr. Herbert Read, in his *English Prose Style* (1937 ed.) fully agrees with Mr. Simmons. Mr. Read writes: "of very few authors can it be said that they had no insidious faults," and among those for whom he thought that claim could be made was Southey, "whose style is a model of consistent 'workmanlike' qualities—the style of a man who writes swiftly and voluminously, and who has discovered the true economy of a clear mind and a clean pen."

Apart from the history of Southey's works, both poetry and prose, Mr. Simmons gives us an excellent study of the poet's life. While he sees the faults of the man, he sees also his great virtues. As we have seen already, Cardinal Newman as a young man was an ardent admirer of Southey's poems, chiefly for their ethical content. "In his use of the doctrine of a future life," Newman wrote in an early essay, "Southey

is admirable. Other writers are content to conduct their heroes to temporal happiness; Southey refuses present comfort to his Ladurlad, Thalaba, and Roderick, but carries them through suffering to another world." Yes, Mr. Simmons shows us the real Southey, Southey the man as well as Southey the writer: he takes us on a sort of pilgrimage, starting from the little town of Wellington in Somerset, where from the fourteenth century onwards the family of Southey is part of the countryside, part of the industrial life of the people—in the reign of Elizabeth, Thomas Southey of Woodford was among the great clothiers of the old woollen manufacturing district —to the year 1774 when Robert Southey the poet was born at Bristol. With Mr. Simmons we can follow this boy all the way. First through the earliest years, when as a small child he lived with his eccentric aunt Miss Tyler, his mother's half-sister; then on to his first day-school at the age of three and thence to a school at the top of St. Michael's Hill in Bristol, where he was "too terrified to learn anything." We follow the young Southey to yet another school, this time at Corston, somewhere between Bristol and Bath, until finally we arrive with him at Westminster, whence he was expelled for writing an article in the school magazine against flogging. We can follow him to Balliol, where for the first time he met Coleridge in Oxford and where with him and with four or five others he formed a scheme for a kind of communistic settlement in America—Pantisocracy. We see him married to Edith Fricker, and leaving her at the church door we go with Southey on his travels through Portugal. Back to London, thence to Bristol and finally to Keswick, where for forty years he lived, working with untiring energy, meeting and arguing with his friends, taking long walks alone, writing endless letters, and playing with his children. Through years of great endeavour, of great achievement, and of recognition which, saddened as they were with the loss of several of his children among whom were the two nearest his heart, his eldest son Herbert, and the most beautiful of all his daughters, Isabel, were lived nobly and unselfishly to the end. In the last years Southey's mind became confused and broken, worn out by its colossal labours and by its many trials, not the least of which was the tragic illness and death of his wife in the autumn of 1837. In 1839 he married again, and it was his old friend Caroline Bowles who shared with him the last four years. Southey, who according to Carlyle was "one of the chief men of England," and of whom Coleridge says: "God knows my heart. It is my full belief and conviction that taking altogether there does not exist the man who could without flattery be called Southey's equal," died on March 21, 1843, and was buried in Crosthwaite Churchyard. Yes, it is a great life, and as told by Mr. Simmons a fascinating life.

On closing this book, which is well illustrated with portraits, my thoughts turned back to a Sunday morning in August 1943. Sitting among a vast congregation in Crosthwaite Church, we heard Canon FitzGerald preach the Centenary Sermon. The text was taken from the IV book of Wisdom 1 and 2: "In the memory of virtue is immortality. . . . When it is present men imitate it; and they long after it when it is departed." The preacher, having given us a vivid and appreciative account of Southey's life and work, said in conclusion: "I trust that I have said enough to justify my choice of words as my text to-day. Southey was no plaster-saint. He had his faults. His high self-confidence led him to overestimate his own writings. He was narrow in some of his views and was apt to appear self-righteous and intolerant in

controversy. But his was a noble and gallant life, a life spent in the defence of all that is true and pure and honourable and lovely and of good report. From his example we may win faith and hope and courage in our own dark hour. I shall have failed in my purpose this morning if I have not enabled you at least to understand the considered judgment of Sir Henry Taylor, himself a distinguished man of letters and the close friend of Southey in the latter's declining years. This is what Sir Henry wrote:

"There were greater poets in his generation, and there were men of a more far-reaching philosophic faculty; but take him for all in all—his ardent and genial piety, his moral strength, the magnitude and variety of his powers, the field which he covered in literature, and the beauty of his life—it may be said of him justly and with no straining of the truth, that of all his contemporaries he was the greatest Man."

You wrote "my days among the dead are past,"
That with the dead your thoughts and hopes had place.
I think the kindly beauty of your face
Lives in the hearts of men whom life holds fast
To high ideals of friendship. Vigorous prose
Streamed from your pen, the child of your strange dreams,
And through your verse a shaft of humour gleams
From sable clouds, firing their grey with rose.
A century has gone and still you roam
The Cumbrian valleys with your friends and peers;
Across the kin-spanned chasm of the years
To Greta's book-filled rooms you call me home.
Tireless you work, with soul and brain and quills—
Seeing man's need . . . where one saw daffodils.

It is of such a life that Mr. Simmons writes with sincerity, with much fair-mindedness, and with so great an understanding.

Mary Winter Were.

Mary Winter Were's Sonnet to Robert Southey and her paper on the Centenary Celebrations at Greta Hall, have been placed with other records of the same in the Keswick Museum.

The Poems of 1944–5

The Committee entrusted by the Council of the Poetry Society with the delicate and onerous task of making a selection of the most representative poems of the year for the first annual volume of its kind, covering the year 1944, are unable to present the result of their prolonged and careful assize, owing to printing difficulties, and in consequence will include poems of 1945 in a combined first volume. All who have submitted or recommended poems are cordially thanked, and the Committee again invite contributions, and also the continued collaboration of readers who are asked to send in copies of any published poems that may seem to be distinctive and worthy of inclusion in this volume. Address all communications to the PSA Annual Committee, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

Poets and Pretenders

HOW refreshing it is to discover a volume of poems as unaffectedly genuine as *Poems Old and New* by the late Rev. T. H. Collinson, collected and edited by Canon Adam Fox (St. Catherine Press). One likes to think, and many people perhaps still do, of poets as unworldly beings, singing unconsciously and from an inner compulsion which ignores the world, and in this volume there is even warranty for this generally absurd delusion, for Mr. Collinson wrote for no public but for his private ear and in a style quite definitely uninfluenced by what he might have imagined to be the popular mode of the moment or what might be thought likely to catch the public ear. This is, of course, how poetry should be written (but usually is not) because for good or ill it more clearly delineates its author for us. How many poems are written to conceal that individual from the public gaze behind a more resplendent effigy implicit in the too-noble lines and how much verbal violence has camouflaged the literary weakling.

However that may be here is simplicity and sincerity and a cultured absence of verbiage which if, at times, too clipped for beauty is yet appropriate enough to the image of the author which is conjured up by his words and ideas. A short poem, "A Miracle of Spring," which we quote is typical:

"One beauty hath a Fir—
Just one, in all the year.
The marvel of it—that old shrivelled thing
All winter through—gray, stricken, hoary.
Now see it, in its youngling green,
Reclothe itself with glory,
Until it stands transformed—the Queen
Of all leaf-greens in Spring.
As if the very spirit of the Earth,
Eager to join the universal mirth,
Rose in that glorious spire."

It is invidiously inadequate to content ourselves with one selection only from so unusual a book but space is limited and it must suffice.

Ruthven Todd is not unknown to readers of poetry and his book *Acreage of the Heart* (William Maclellan, 6s.) is filled with examples of his pleasant verse, which is not without feeling nor on occasion depth, but is without any strong flavour or originality either of thought or manner. It is one of those books which are hard to criticise except for those evidences of literary composition which are the common but irrelevant phenomena of this age, which persists in regarding poetry as a mental product. Mr. Todd has much to say of this sort and it is only fair to admit that he says it well, but such work is not exciting to read and, because one is unmoved, one is glad to have done with it and be left with the recollection of literary and technical ability and such content as may derive therefrom.

Another from the same "Poetry Scotland" series is "The Seven Journeys," by W. S. Graham (Maclellan, 6s.), but there the similarity ends. The opening lines

"I am the hawk-heart braced in the epic's hero
Hollow and lit in a single follyless zone
Twinned with a dawn and a dark."

suggest a skill with words which by an exaggeration of virtuosity is without virtue and makes these "journeys" as arduous and hazardous as only too many words can. We lost our way early for the gradients became no less steep nor the way less stony. We never felt before that a large vocabulary could be anything but matter for congratulation, but we know better now, it can be a pitfall.

And yet another; this time "Women of the Happy Island," by Adam Drinan (Maclellan, 6s.) and yet again different, but still too often one with them in a conscious artistry which comes not very near to poetry. Mr. Drinan bewilders us too at times although not by the brilliance of his word-play, as Mr. Graham, but by a cryptic compression which seems to take no thought for the common man and his need for comprehension. Yet we liked much of his work even when it did not flow as a poem should with the natural ease which does not pass understanding:

"If a single heart has been hurt
by the pressure of common birth,
neither can any breath
die away to itself.
Stricken woman, take his hand,
the atoms' pressure in the man's."

Illogical in the argument of the first four lines the poem does not further assist us with its last line. This poet prefaces each of his poems with an explanation, a picture as it were of what inspires his lines but where this could help the understanding it seemed unnecessary while, as here, when it did not it seemed a great waste of time. The author's work has however a strong individuality which gives his book a flavour of its own, an elemental tang of the Scottish wild. He writes of what he loves and preserves much of its beauty in transcribing it.

To take up a book with the intriguing title *Beginning with Plato*, by Joseph Warren Beach (University of Minnesota Press, $2.00, Humphrey Milford, 12s.) is to have some expectation of variety to say the least; and in the scope and range of theme this expectation is not disappointed. But, alas, there is little but monotony to be had in the reading, and in our view Mr. Beach has little of the technical accomplishment or the sensibility of a poet if he be judged upon this collection of his work. Indeed we think it not too harsh to describe this book as poor, if viewed as poetry, and scarcely so-so if judged as verse, for the author is no master of versification nor remarkably adept with words. He is better in his modern pieces than in the traditional ones, but in these there is much flatness as, for instance, the following, taken from "Succession":

"And when I stumped that field,
I felt as if I were his father,
Who cleared the first land
And built a house.
My father built on the ell,
But he slept himself
In his father's bed
In the old house;
And that's where I sleep."

We do not know what this is, we only know what it is not, and that is, poetry. It is without interest whatever one chooses to call it and often in this book there is to be met the same pointless sort of writing. Where, quite rarely, Mr. Beach indulges in classical forms he is inexpert, and rhyme words and poor rhythms attend him to his undoing.

A refreshing change and another transatlantic importation is *Note-books of Night*

by Edmund Wilson (Secker & Warburg, 7s. 6d.). Here is the work of a critic, experienced, urbane, witty and polished; saved by an intelligence and deep experience from all that is loose or formless, pointless or vapid. It is work which is work in the commonly accepted meaning of that word since its ease is the product of stresses encountered and overcome in the past so often that they have now no fight left in them. So what Mr. Wilson says now is said the hard way, if with ease, and we are for that reason the more entertained and impressed. The first two couplets from "Disloyal Lines to an Alumnus" are a sample of his urbanity in satire, an art apparently beyond our modern skill:

"I, too, have faked the glamor of gray towers,
I, too, have sung the ease of sultry hours—
Deep woods, sweet lanes, wide playing-fields, smooth ponds,
Where clean boys train to sell their country's bonds."

We liked too those poems where nature is described, poems sometimes with no apparent depth of thought but with an atmosphere which is the essence of poetry. A poem called "Provincetown, 1936" is an excellent example of this; it begins thus:

"Fat-pronged starfish, oyster-fed,
That slow on spirit fingers slide;
Snails in plump blue folds that spread
Purple feet below the tide;
Crabs that, humped in stolen homes
Fence from doors they cannot lock;
Polyps budded pink, like wombs,
Filamented to the rock;"

The point about this book is its interest, a matter which is apt to be overlooked or disregarded in considering a book of verse. There should be, of course, this sense of sitting down to a banquet of good things when one takes a book of poems in hand, but how seldom is this vouchsafed to us; and how few poets or versifiers seem to know how to conceal the effort or the pretension from their pages leaving behind the clear, unruffled word, precise and invigorating, to entangle and seduce the mind of the reader. A good proportion, nearly half, of the volume is taken up with prose pieces, republished it is said, to meet a constant demand. We are well content to believe that these have been long awaited on this side of the Atlantic.

Cambridge University Press have published a short-long poem (about 160 lines) by E. K. Ellis called "Rebuild the Towers" (1s.). The poem in an irregular metre and rhyme is, as the author puts it, a Thanksgiving for the re-dedication of a Holy Place destroyed in War. It is well done with a mellow devotion and a quiet imagery which makes it a poem to read and like:

"Pillars and arches spring in such design
That every space and every line
Should still content and still entice
To things unseen, beckoning like a glade
In Paradise——"

The devotional note is too gentle to be oppressive and if there is some small moralising, in a religio-philosophical vein at the end, this was perhaps inevitable as a tailpiece to such a theme.

The Collected Poems of Richard Spender (Sidgwick & Jackson, 7s. 6d.) are another oasis in this article. The author, killed before his prime either as a man or a poet is, of course, well known to our readers and we welcome this first collection of his verse. The vigorous quality of his work, which yet avoids all ostentation or unruliness, gives evidence of reserves, of potentialities, which were stultified and denied by his death in action in March 1943. His work has the quality one would expect from the combination of a mind gravely gay with an ease of expression which is rare, and a love of and interest in life in all its aspects. He could be tenderly lyrical as in "Willow Creek at Sunset":

"Here, against the evening sky
Mottled in pink and red and blue
Praying with blackly knotted arms
Kneels a crippled willow tree."

or tender

"A little reed
Sobbing on the waters.
Or chuckling to the ripples
When the wind plays music
In the stillness of the night,
So that the willows sleep."

or satirical

"The little fat man
And his weary, languishing
(and so experienced) daughter
Lie in gaudy bottomed deck-chairs
And wave expensive cigarettes
At the cement fish-pond
With its unhealthily hybrid boast
Of cultured lily-flower."

His moods are many but his touch so sure that one does not even notice the absence of rhyme in pieces so apt for them and so therefore to be expected. This is the work of youth only in its unspoiled energy of observation and expression. It has none of the gaucheries nor the opinionated violence which mars the verse of so many young writers and his death is a loss not only to his friends. We might have said also of Richard Spender that he held to no such heresy, so often accepted nowadays, that poetry is a matter of thought or imagination or even inspiration only. He knew too well that to all these things must be added form in expression by rhythm and cadence and a subtlety of language which must be at once beautiful and unpretentious. He held a faith which led him to emphasise the beauties of his inspirations by presenting them in beautiful raiment knowing that grace may be lost by a dull appearance. He certainly would not have written such opening lines to any book as these which first strike the eye in "World of the Heart" by Roy Porter (Fortune Press, 6s.):

"Coming down there was silence
About the space of half an hour
Down the tense path
Coiled under the aisle of trees."

The endeavour for the poetic touch here seems to be confined to two adjectives, tense, in the third line and coiled, in the fourth. Both would be unusual in prose. But apart from this we suggest that there is a lack of nearly every other ingredient in these lines or in the rest of this poem which must go to form either verse or poetry. The arbitrary ending of lines at a certain point is nothing to the question

"The lake in the hollow shivered
Clashed against the sun like a
Cymbal and we quivered"

But let us enquire further, for Mr. Porter has abilities which are not to be despised.

There is imaginative power and feeling in much that he has written, although there are obscurities, realised or not, and some impertinences, as for instance

"Sing on the river The type written lines
Of your tears Of your fears."

and later in the same poem

"Cower with me lady In the dry pipe-line
Each alone Of the bone."

The best of his poems is, we think, "Nordland," which has both form and power. We quote two stanzas, there are twenty-seven and all good.

"My eye from this stark promontory ranges
Over the unmysterious Cheshire plain,
Seeing time's decay and the war's changes
From grass to grain,

And many arable acres and gardens
Of heavy lodges flaking there alone
Chilled under rank trees where the warm mould hardens
With weed and stone."

We are astonished that the poet who could write this should ever cower in a dry bone.

An edition of Poetry London, No. 2, by Paul Potts, called *Instead of a Sonnet* (4s. 6d.) comes next and is refreshing for its originality. The notice on the dust-cover describes the contents as poster poetry, whatever that may be, and as oral in origin. With the latter we agree and further would remark that all poetry should be. But, alas, the poetry of Mr. Potts is not entirely free from nonsense and we do not admit to flaunting a judgment too dully critical in saying so.

"But listen people anywhere punching time;
If you're walking to the moon
I've got clean sox for you."

We have divorced this from the context but we saw no harm since it was irrelevant anyway. Refreshing, however, this work certainly is. It has vivacity and drive but if the description, poster poetry, noted above, is intended to indicate some superficiality of appeal, we agree once again.

The French Muse published by Frederick Muller (6s.) is a collection of fifty poems translated by the veteran Wilfred Thorley and presented with the original French and the English translation, side by side. This seems to us a good, bold arrangement but we think Mr. Thorley survived the self-imposed test, for the results which he gives us in his native tongue are graced very often indeed with a poetic quality, whether his own or the original's, which makes his book well worth while.

"O Sultan, though thy life be spent
Lapped round with soothest ravishment,
Yet shalt thou die, and be no more.
Then live and reign—for life is sweet.
The fallow deer with folded feet
Lie dreaming on the forest floor.

The mounted stairway leads thee back
To lowly earth; bright fires turn black;
The grave cries 'Lo!' to humankind.
Time's changing moons unplume the bird;
The slow resurgent tides are stirred
And dying voices freight the wind."

These two passages are from "La Chanson des Doreurs de Proues," by Victor Hugo and are all we have space to quote. The book is substantial, some 160 pages, and is annotated both critically and biographically by the author in a most useful and interesting manner.

Sir William Beach Thomas has written *Poems of a Countryman* (Michael Joseph, 6s.), which is very welcome indeed for its deep love and knowledge of the country as well as for itself. It has, too, a neat, crisp humour which is uncommon in such poems.

"For it is winter now,
And I desire sweet spring—
And then the summer soon to be—
And then—Oh, let me see
One little autumn thing
The red fruit breaking on the spindle tree."

These poems are written with an ease which brings the author to us with a clarity which stamps his work with a pleasant individuality. To say that many, if not all of them are verse, as distinct from poems, will neither surprise nor hurt him for we believe that that was what he set out to write, and with an uncomplicated desire to amuse and instruct which has been completely satisfied.

This lovely land has another illustrator both in verse and line in Miss A. Dorothy Holmes, who has described and drawn the beauties of England in a volume which she calls by the first three words of this paragraph. The book is published by Wilding & Son and is a pleasant enough addition to the literature upon this nostalgic theme. We are not competent to comment upon the drawings but they seem to us to be excellent and the verses which they adorn have the same quality of excellent craftsmanship, in which nothing has been scamped, but skilful effort honestly but unnoticeably applied. The verses, however, remain verses, of a pleasing quality, it is true, but slight, and we are really in doubt at times whether the verses illustrate the drawings or the other way about. But we have nothing but praise for the unpretentious which has as much skill as this and does not attempt anywhere to claim more than is justly due to its charming self.

To describe in one phrase any work of art is perhaps impossible, it certainly is to do so adequately, but if we were asked for so succinct a description of *The Simple Vision*, by Huw Menai (Chapman & Hall, 6s.) we should call it the poetry of a plain man, but be obliged at once to add those qualifying and explanatory paragraphs which are necessary to give a proper evaluation of it. The plainness of Huw Menai is superficial and consists only in his simplicity and directness of expression. It is a plainness in which he contrives to be beautiful, arresting, provocative (of thought) and, dare

we say so trite a thing, satisfying. In his work there is an unconsciousness of form, which yet never eludes it, a directness of statement which is the antithesis of modernist mystification and yet which is never within sight of becoming prose, and a clarity of view which owes just nothing to the tricks of the trade or to verbal virtuosity. The author is modern enough, modern all through, but in his method is a repudiation of that false argument and justification for the modern school that nothing worth-while may now be said or done in plain song. He abolishes the controversy and the school at one and the same time without appearing to notice either, which is, of course, as it should be, with one with much to say and many to listen.

Mr. Menai has, it will be gathered, pleased us again with this new volume. The same unstraining mastery of the rules of prosody, which seem only to facilitate his utterance, is evident; but there is much more than a trace of those past labours, faithfully performed, in that deftness and economy of expression which results in a verbal distinction which is as innocent of dictionary dredging as anything well could be. There is a zest too which knows nothing of violence or pretension but which is aroused by simplicities as natural as the author's own:

Where waters show the Sun's strong eye
Shining within a cloudless sky,
And flowers bloom and multiply
I have come with the honey bee
To draw some sweetness unto me,
To give an outing to my soul
And live each moment to the full,
To function like a bird, to sing
A wordless tune, or take a wing
Into the realm, Sweet Nothingness
Where Fairies dance on Watercress;
I come this day to live, not think
On ultimates, to eat and drink
The heart-sustaining good things given
So freely by the Hand of heaven,
Not brood, why should existence be
And maze myself in mystery.

This, the whole of a short poem called "Enjoyment," is, at once, a clue to the man and his work and in both the simplicity is that of life itself.

And last, a batch from Messrs. Routledge, all in the same bindings and all at 5s., but how different in content. The first, "Flowers for a Lady," by Roy McFadden, is on the whole a rather modernist production with the usual faults and virtues of that type of work. We can never quite get to like that feeling that someone is trying to impress us with words, either by an unusual context or by their violence. Yet we are often moved to admiration for undoubted ability and in this case there is a proper lucidity and imaginative power which makes the book acceptable. But what we miss, and it is a felt want, is the lyrical note. Is it an old-fashioned taste to like it and to be disappointed at its absence or its feeble note? There is too much conscious strength in this latter-day stuff and too little of the lyric's much more lasting delicacy. One

would imagine that the world had suddenly become insupportable for music instead of pursuing much the same course as before, a little faster, no doubt, but certainly not without signs of a drift towards better things. Hope at all events is not lost and now is the time, if there ever was one, for a new flowering in our poetry. Mr. McFadden's art and his modernism are well illustrated in "The Dog":

"In all these towering agonies,
I watch a dog snap at a fly,
Leaving it dead and cold; and this
Was tragic as the blustering lie
Shaking the meagre shivering mind,
Or big-booted brutality
Waving the bully's fist. And yet,
This was no crime, for easily
He killed for sport. But we
Grave architects of calvaries
Kill with the Christ within us, meek
With honourable humilities."

It would be unfair not to quote a little of his "Song," inspired by Robeson's voice for here his pen is lyrical in a mournful key it is true, but still urged with a deeper emotion that is common in this book:

"O Singer, sing your song aloud;
Sing for the weak who cannot sing,
Sing for the listener in the crowd,
For those who will not help themselves
The persecuted and the proud.

I, listening in this sea-swept town,
Beside twin-islands grey with rain,
And the faint sky-wrinkling frown
Of Donegal across the bay,
And Scotland when the mist is blown,"

The second of this Routledge issue is "We Who are Fortunate," by Alan Rook and here there is a gentler interpretation of life, on the whole, and more music. Mr. Rook seems to be more reconciled to the inevitable disasters and uglinesses of life.

"I think I have learnt to accept the untimely
bullet, for ripeness is all of death:"

without condoning them, however. He explores them constantly for beauty and does not forget the necessity for a good tight rhythm nor often the fact that rhymes make music. But the author also experiments with that formlessness which reads like prose, relying upon the thought and the images only to make it poetry. We believe that in things like "Green Mountain," for instance, a fine poem has been wasted and it is both long and has much beauty.

"Flowers in a wood have a peculiar language
throwing up words which we hear, though not with human hearing,
recalling our lost childhood, the terror of that moment
when change first manifests itself within us."

This is a sample and in our submission, and in spite of its beauty, it is not poetry in that it does not conform sufficiently to the technical demands of that art.

No. 3 of this interesting collection is "This Other Planet," by R. N. Currey, which we approached with some added interest resulting from its description as objective reporting which might have a greater survival value than poetry which exploits emotion and vague idealism. The vague idealism certainly sounds unattractive but we have been taught to believe that objective description is scarcely poetry and that emotion, and subjective emotion at that, is absolutely necessary for it and presumably therefore for survival. But let us investigate these hesitant claims.

"Nothing is new under the sun.
They stood beside him with a gun,
Gave him a minute or two to dress,
Pushed aside his wife and son,
Too numb with shock to show distress,
He went with them, and saw the sun
Go backward, gathering scattered fire . . ."

We do not entirely agree that there is no exploitation of emotion here—it is not unpoignant and the rather cryptic end has a distinctly unobjective flavour. But there are many other and possibly better examples of this somewhat austere tenderness which we think is much more than reporting—

"For a short time after his death
A man retains his semblance; friends come in
On tip-toe, peer at the pale, parchment face
And think: O, death, what dignity has death
Conferred on him! Carry away a picture
That blurs as surely as the buried features."

and later

"Death is, like birth, convulsive, but decay
Gradual as pregnancy."

But still we should not like to make any assertions about survival for this sort of thing or even to speculate much about it. It surely lacks the allure which would keep the volume handy for re-reading even although it has power of observation, a very considerable originality of expression and plenty of imagination.

And last but assuredly not least, "The Tune of Flowers," sung by Miss Diana James, between the ages of 14 and 17. Messrs. Routledge claim no concession on account of these tender years and, indeed, they need not for we believe this volume to be the best of the four if we look for poetry and not for those subtleties of expression, that maturer experience at once more complicated and more self-conscious, which is the mark of so much that is published nowadays. Miss James is as yet almost entirely free from self-consciousness in what she writes and her emotions, burning everywhere in her book, need no unduly expressive epithets for their enshrining. In "Dallas His Dirge" she is simple and poignant enough on any view.

"Dallas is dead
It was the tenth of May
When Dallas died,
It was a week ago to-day,
And what is left?
Sylvia. Sylvie cried
"God what is left?"
And "Sylvia" the wind replied.

. . . . . Dallas is gone;
Dallas is dead The dreamy afternoon
Said the dawn Whispered "Soon, soon
The morning said You will forget!"

But do not let us give the impression that there is any immaturity in this work. In some ways it is the most mature of these four books which we have, as it were, lumped together. It is old, old with that part of us which is immortal—the emotions —which are, after all, the exhalation or the perfume of the soul and which are so much more compelling then the most deep-thought lucubrations of the mind. There is an immediacy about the emotion in much of Miss James's poetry which is not transient at all and if anything has survival value it is this which positively gains from simplicity and an absence of verbal virtuosity. Its appeal depends upon no gift or acquirement beyond the fundamental gift for the fusion of herself with her thought; and by this subjection of her own mind to the incomparably surer hand of the spirit she evokes a response which it is no trouble to remember, indeed, is hard to forget. There is one love poem of which we should like to quote a few lines:

"Oh, cold my heart is for the pass of love.
Upon the hill I saw the wind that drove
The look that is of lovers from your eyes;
And as I wandered through your mind I found
It was a winter where my heart was bound,
And there I learnt the way that laughter dies."

Still the same simplicity and, yet as much maturity in the true perception of beauty as might grace any age.

We will conclude, without apology, with these words from the dust-cover. "The poems belong to the golden age of poetry when expression is instinctive, and rhythm a natural function of the senses." We have heard no better definition of real poetry for years.

The Victory

NOT with arrogant trumpets, nor insulting drums
Nor in swift sounds of death, slam and shrill,
Nor with stiffening pain, the victory comes.

But here, where the clustered daffodil
Brandishes beauty on the Roman mound,
The memory of a trench upon the hill,

Where upon old contortions of the ground
The effortless legions of the grass tread,
Where tremulous new leaves mask the old wound

Life holds a quiet triumph on the dead;
Perrenial leaves have conquered men that kill,
From the marrow of death is beauty bred;

Artillery cannot slay the daffodil. *J. Sibly.*

NEWS FROM MOSCOW:

Poets and Poetry in War-Time Russia

Outstanding Soviet writers gathered at a meeting of the U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) to set up a literature section. Many of those present were in Moscow in between trips to the front. On opening the meeting Vladimir Kemenov, President of VOKS, made the following remarks: "The work carried on by VOKS, especially during the war years, has shown the increasing interest of our allies in all aspects of Soviet culture, literature included. It is with the purpose of satisfying this growing interest and of promoting an exchange of mutual information on the development of literature in democratic countries that we are organising a Literature Section at VOKS."

These opening remarks were followed by a report on Soviet literature abroad by Alexander Karaganov, Vice-President of VOKS, from which we quote part:

"The popularity of Soviet literature abroad has grown by leaps and bounds during the present war. This success is due primarily to the fact that Soviet writers portray people engaged in a struggle that is to determine the fate of all humanity. Russia has saved the world from Nazism. Millions and hundreds of millions of people in the West and the East have now come to a realisation of this fact. It is therefore quite clear that books written by Soviet authors have a particular interest to-day when the reader abroad is desirous of understanding the 'Russian miracle,' as our victory is termed in the West. Foreign readers to-day want to know the secret that lies behind our successes at the front.

Alexander Karaganov concluded his speech with the following remarks: "Our task to-day is to produce more good books for our foreign readers, books that will proclaim the truth about our country, our people and the Red Army to our friends who now number hundreds of millions. An equally important aim of our work should be the study of literature and literary life in the democratic countries allied with us in the struggle against Hitler. We must broaden the acquaintance of our writers and of the whole Soviet public with the important wartime work being done by the writers of the United States, England, France, and other countries. Mutual study of literary activities and an interchange of information between Soviet and foreign writers will do much to strengthen creative contacts between the literatures and peoples of democratic countries. These contacts may be effected through various channels such as exchange of books, information and articles, group and individual correspondence, radio broadcasts, etc."

The poet Samuel Marshak noted with regret that close contacts had not yet been established between poets in different countries. We know very little of English and American poetry and the English and American people know little of our poetry. One of the greatest obstacles to a better knowledge of poetry is the lack of qualified translators.

The poet Sergei Mikhalkov developed Marshak's idea still further and suggested that the Bureau of the Literature Section establish contact with translators and do everything possible to help them in improving the translations of Soviet poetry into foreign languages and of foreign poetry into Russian.

We quote a few remarks from the speech made by the poet Semyon Kirsanovt. "We feel a keen need for contact with authors writing in other languages. We want

to know how they write, what they are doing, and what they plan to do after the war. This mutual contact is especially important for the general creative growth of all progressive literature. The Literature Section should help all of us to broaden our knowledge of what our colleagues abroad are writing, thinking and saying."

FROM A WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

"On August 17, 1934, we Soviet writers gathered in the Hall of Columns in the House of Trade Unions to open the first All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers. As though it were only yesterday, we recall the wonderful speech made by A. Zhdanov, eminent statesman and a prominent figure in Soviet public affairs. His precise and inclusive appraisal of the significance of Soviet literature as 'the most progressive, most intellectual in content and a literature of the people, in its very essence,' impressed us all as did his enumerations of the important and responsible tasks confronting us Soviet writers and poets.

"At the date of the First Writers' Congress, Soviet literature had already produced a number of significant works which had won recognition both in the Soviet Union and abroad. We knew that progressive intellectuals in other countries were already heeding the voice of our literature. We knew that by fostering the idea of the new man, we were laying the foundation for the triumph of genuine humanism.

"A very important task confronted us in all its entirety and seriousness at that time. As J. Stalin expressed it, we had to become 'engineers of the human soul' and promote the spiritual growth of the Soviet people. Such a task demanded stringent self-discipline, integrity and clarity of outlook, intellectual broadmindedness, skill and experience in the art of writing.

"Seven years after the Congress, war struck. The war has produced many significant works, especially in poetry. Proof of this may be found in such splendid things as Margarita Aligar's 'Zoya,' Alexander Tvardovsky's 'Vassili Terkin,' Arkady Kuleshov's 'The Banner of the Brigade,' poems by Vera Inber, Olga Bergolts, Grigola Abashidze, Maxim Bylsky, Mikola Bazhan and Pavlo Tychina, and popular songs by Mikhail Isakovsky and lyrics by Gafur Gulyam.

"The heroic struggle being waged by the Soviet people to-day is laying the foundation for a single great epic and preparing the way for the appearance in literature of a hero that will belong to many peoples—a very rare phenomenon in literature and one that is to be found only in a brilliant epoch of human development.

"Our country is now drawing near to victory, to triumph. To the peacetime achievements of the Soviet Union will be added the wonderful victories won in the fight against Nazism. From the point of view of the prospects awaiting us, to-day and to-morrow are even more promising and magnificent than was our yesterday. Our tasks, the tasks of engineers of the human soul, are to-day even vaster and more profound than they were in the past. The ranks of professional writers will soon be augmented by new, young forces who have grown to manhood in the fire and trials of war. They will bring with them the creative vim which was with them all during their life in the army and that eagerness for life and valour which made them a generation of victors. They will come with new material and new words. They will bring with them the stern laws of victory. They will bring a new military style of work into our midst, their own new, military tempo."

The Lay of Igor's March

Vera Adrianova-Perets, Corresponding Member of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, recently delivered a report at the Institute of Literature on "The Lay of Igor's March" and "The Lands Beyond the Don." Both these works are outstanding examples of the old Russian epic, reflecting the ardent patriotism and the political sagacity of the Russian people of these days. The famous "Lay of Igor's March" was written by an unknown author at the end of the twelfth century and depicts one of the phases in the heroic struggle waged by the Russians against the Polovtsy, a neighbouring nomad people. Both in depth of ideas and beauty of poetry, this poem deservedly ranks among the world's greatest epics. "The Lands Beyond the Don" dates from the fifteenth century and depicts the victory won by the Russians under Prince Dmitri Donskoi over the Tatar hordes in a battle fought at Kulikovo Field, on the banks of the Don.

The Pushkin Estate at Mikhailovskoye

After heavy fighting the Red Army liberated the Puskhin estate at Mikhailovskoye and the adjacent villages Trigorskoye and the Pushkinskiye Gory. All these places are closely associated with the life and work of the great Russian poet. It was to Mikhailovskoye, his mother's family estate, that Pushkin was banished for eighteen months in 1924–26. He had also lived there as a boy for two years (1817–1819), and was to return later in 1827 and again in 1835. This unpretentious estate is located on a hill overlooking a winding stream called Sorota. The house itself is surrounded by a shady part which merges with the thickly wooded Mikhailovskoye Groves.

The poet loved this deserted nook, a quiet haven of labour and inspiration. He loved the scenery in these native haunts of his and repeatedly sang of it in his poetry. It was not for naught that he said of himself in *Eugene Onegin:*

"Now, I was born for country quiet,
To be some peaceful villager,
For there my lyre's note grows louder,
My dreams and fancies livelier."

Village life was always a source of inspiration to Pushkin. The months spent in banishment at Mikhailovskoye were among the most prolific and brilliant of his whole literary career. It was here that he wrote many chapters of *Eugene Onegin*, his novel in verse which always remained his favourite work. Mikhailovskoye was also the birthplace of *Boris Godunov*, the first real Russian tragedy, and the humorous poem "Count Nulin." Here it was that he finished "The Gypsies" and wrote some of the best of his lyrics. Pushkin's solicitude in Mikhailovskoye was enlivened only by his beloved old nurse Arina Rodionovna and by the society he found at the Osipov's whose estate was in the nearby village of Trigorskeye. A few close friends, former classmates at the Lycée, also visited Pushkin in his exile. Among them were Delvig, a fellow poet, and Pushchin, who was to win prominence as a participant in the Decembrist uprising of 1825. The latter brought a manuscript copy of Griboyedov's famous comedy *Woe From Wit* to Pushkin, who read it aloud at one sitting. The banished poet also made friends with Nikolai Yazykov, a young poet who was staying with the Osipovs.

During the months spent in exile at Mikhailovskoye, Pushkin fell in love with

Anna Kern, a relative of the Osipovs, to whom he dedicated one of his best poems—"I recall that wondrous moment." This lyric later inspired the Russian composer Mikhail Glinka of "Ivan Susanin" and "Ruslan and Ludmila" fame to write a lovely romance.

However hard life in exile was for Pushkin he never lost his innate cheerfulness and courage. He expressed his bright outlook and his humanism in the famous "Bacchic Song," a joyous paean to reason and to beauty. Maxim Gorky, the greatest Russian humanist of our time, was quite right in calling this song the most life-asserting production in all of Russian poetry.

The Svyatogorsk Monastery and the village of Voronich are also associated with Pushkin. The Monastery cathedral, built on the top of the hill in 1569 at the order of Ivan the Terrible is a wonderful example of Pskov church architecture. The grave of this greatest of Russian poets lies at the Monastery walls. In the forties of the last century a marble statue was erected on the grave, which also holds the bodies of Pushkin's parents.

Not far from Trigorskoye is the old village of Voronich. In the fourteenth century there was a fortress on this spot while the site of the present village was once the centre of a large, bustling town, the largest suburb of Pskov. In 1581 Voronich was captured and sacked by the Polish King Stephen Bathory. It was subsequently rebuilt only to be destroyed again in 1634, this time by the Lithuanians. After that Voronich began to decline and by Pushkin's time all that remained of it was the rampart of the fortress that had once stood on the site and the church on the top of the hill. One of Pushkin's most famous works is associated with the site of the old town of Voronich. It was here that he conceived his *Boris Godunov*, the first real Russian tragedy in which the people figured. In his draft of the preface to this tragedy the poet describes the sources upon which he drew: "The study of Shakespeare, Karamzin and our old chroniclers gave me the idea of putting one of the most dramatic epochs of modern history into a drama. I imitated Shakespeare in his bold sweeping depiction of characters. . . . Karamzin helped me in developing the events of the story and the chronicles were the source of the ideas and speech characteristic of those days."

Such are the places associated with the name of Pushkin and, by reason of this, dear to the heart of every Russian. The Soviet Government showed particular concern in their preservation. By a decree of the Council of People's Commissars in 1922 the Svyatyo Gory (now called the Pushkinskiye Gory), Mikhailovskoye and Trigorskoye were declared a state sanctuary. The centenary of Puskkin's death was marked by memorial celebrations held in the sanctuary. These were attended by Russian scholars, writers and artists as well as by many peasants from the adjacent villages. A new building to serve as a museum was erected on the foundation of the manor house in Mikhailovskoye which had burned down.

In 1941, the German barbarians burst into the sanctuary and remained there for three years. The home of Pushkin's nurse and the Museum building in Mikhailovskoye were burned to the ground. The Monastery was blown up and mines were laid in the poet's grave. The joy that we experience from the knowledge that these sacred places have been liberated from the enemy is even greater than the bitterness aroused by the destruction and desecration wreaked upon them by the Nazi vandals. We know that the hour is not far distant, when the hated enemy will

be finally defeated, and then we shall all proclaim with Pushkin: "Hail to the sun, let gloom disappear!"

Turgenev's Birthplace

The estate of the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev in the village of Spasskoye-Lutovinovo in Orel Region has been restored after its destruction by the Germans. The Nazis showed bestial vandalism in their treatment of the Turgenev estate. They wrecked the church built by the novelist's grandfather, burned the home for aged peasants built at Turgenev's expense as well as the carriage-house and other outbuildings, and felled more than seven hundred trees in the park and the fruit orchard.

The Leningrad Branch of the State Publishers of Political Literature has commenced the publication of documents on the defence of Leningrad. The first volume, already issued, covers the first two years of the war. It contains Government decrees and decisions concerning Leningrad, newspaper and magazine features describing life in the hero-city during the blockade, appeals and greetings addressed to the city's defenders, orders issued by local authorities.

Many of these documents are published for the first time.

Volume XIII of Belinsky's Complete Works

The Maxim Gorky Publishing House in Leningrad is preparing to bring out the final, XIII, volume of Vissarion Belinsky's complete works. Vissarion Belinsky (1811–1848) is one of the greatest figures in Russia's cultural history. He is the most eminent literary critic Russia has produced. In his profound and fascinating articles he revealed the significance of Pushkin, Gogol, Bermontov, Koltsov and other writers to Russians of various social strata. Belinsky's significance, however, goes much farther than this. In addition to his gift for searching and subtle analyses of purely literary works, he was a man of the broadest social and democratic views. He was endowed with the ardent temperament of a civic champion which won him the name of "Vissarion Furioso."

In one of his speeches made during the present war Stalin placed Belinsky alongside of Chernyshevsky in the list of those great men of the past who are the pride of the Russian nation. Mentor of our literary tastes, a teacher who taught us how to live, Belinsky is a living example of true patriotism.

"It is impossible not to love one's country," wrote Belinsky, ". . . only this love must not be merely a smug satisfaction with what already exists, but it ought to be a vital desire to achieve perfection. In short, love for country must at the same time be love for mankind. . . . To love one's country means that one ardently desires to see it the realisation of mankind's ideals. It means doing everything in one's power to bring about this realisation."

Though he lived in the dismal days of reaction, Belinsky never lost faith in the radient future of his country and its people. In 1840 he wrote:

"We envy our grandchildren and great-grandchildren who are destined to see Russia in 1940 when it will stand at the head of the civilised world—giving laws to the world in both science and art and accepting deferentially proffered tributes of respect from the whole of educated humanity."

These words make it quite clear why we cherish Belinsky, why the publication of the final volume of his complete works is such a significant event.

A Poet of Ideas

"Hamlet-Baratynsky" was the name Pushkin gave to Eugene Baratynsky, his younger contemporary and close friend. This characterisation of Baratynsky was both profound and true as were all of Pushkin's judgments of people.

An inquisitive intellect, a spirit tormented by doubts for the fate of the world and of mankind form the very essence of Baratynsky's life and works and make him kin to the Prince of Denmark. This was not a cold rational reflection, but a tireless anxious quest after the meaning of life, a quest prompted by sincere feelings.

Pushkin keenly appreciated the "truthfulness of thought and feeling, precision of expression, taste, clarity and harmony" of Baratynsky's poetry. He described Baratynsky as "one of our finest poets, still inadequately appreciated by his fellow-countrymen."

The critic Belinsky also referred to Baratynsky as a profound upright "poet of ideas." "The elegiac tone of his poetry," Belinsky wrote, "stems from reflection, from his views of life. . . . Of all the poets who appeared on the literary horizon together with Pushkin, Baratynsky undoubtedly holds first place."

Independence and originality of ideas is what Baratynsky demands of the poet. He himself met these requirements brilliantly. Pushkin stressed just this aspect in another of his references to Baratynsky: "He is original because he thinks in a way of his own, rightly and independently, while his feelings are always proud and forceful."

Like Vyazemsky and Delvig, two other poets of Pushkin's time, Baratynsky began his poetic career with light verse in the style of Batyushkov, the Russian Parny. His early genres were romances (for example, his "Discussion" to which Glinka wrote a charming duet), literary epigrams and especially elegies, both on descriptive and love themes. Through Delvig, Baratynsky became intimate with Pushkin and his circle which included a number of Decembrists. Their ideas had an unmistakable influence on the young poet.

As a writer, he also came under the influence of Lord Byron, who dominated the minds of progressive society in those years. In Baratynsky's work, however, romanticism was combined with a classical clarity and precision of style.

From elegiac lyrics Baratynsky went on to a series of romantic poems which were also highly original. The first of them—"Eda" (1825)—tells of a simple Finnish girl who was seduced by a Russian officer and died a tragic death.

In his later poems "The Ball" (1826) and "Concubine" (1831) Baratynsky described the aristocratic world with all its hypocrisy and egoism. The end of the 1820's marks the beginning of the second—Moscow—period in Baratynsky's life, during which he inclined more and more to a pessimistic outlook. His lyrics now became predominantly philosophic. The increasing reaction which set in after the failure of the Decembrist uprising plunged Baratynsky into melancholy.

His only refuge was his poetry of ideas. But the human intellect, alas, proved unable to divine the eternal mysteries of life. The poet felt alone and homeless amidst people. He felt drawn to nature, to the boundless sea, free and indomitable as he himself. In its depths "the descendant of Apollo will bury his dreams, his useless talent." In these lines, permeated with hopelessness and yet breathing courage, Baratynsky again, as in his youth, seems to be echoing Byron's famous appeal to the ocean in "Childe Harold."

We can appreciate him as a knowing and honest seeker after truth and a remarkable artist for whom poetry was not a trivial amusement but a life work. Although it came very late—only in the 1890's—he did achieve recognition both as a poet-thinker and as a master of style from such prominent Russian symbolists as Valery Bryusov and Alexander Block. Following them, Mayakovsky, Bagritsky and many other poets of to-day came to appreciate Baratynsky's poetry.

A memorial meeting on the occasion of the centenary of Baratynsky's death was held in the Moscow Writers' Club. The literary critic Korneli Zelinsky made a report on the life and works of Baratynsky. Readings from his poetry were given by Dmitri Zhuravlev.

The Bookshelf

The Soviet Writers' Publishing House has brought out *Poems* by Alexei Surkov, 1943: The volume includes the following poems: "Russia Vindictive," "Divisions Move Westward," "Victors," "Retribution, Soldier!", "Sevastopol" and "A Soldier's Heart." (100 pp., printing, 10,000); and *Poems* by Constantin Simonov, 1937–1943 (145 pp.; printing, 20,000).

Lydia Evseyeva sends a Statement on English Translations of Russian Poets

Russian readers made their first acquaintance with English poets in translation in the eighteenth century. Nineteenth-century literature in Russia was enriched by classic translations of Byron, Gray, and Southey made by two of the foremost Russian poets—Vassili Zhukovsky and Mikhail Lermontov, the latter doing a very fine translation of Byron's Hebrew melodies. Russian symbolists have also translated English poets. Actually, English poetry lived a second life in the Russian language.

Russian poetry, however, has been less fortunate. To this day no translation exists that can be said to have become part of English literature as Zhukovsky's translations of English poetry have become an integral part of Russian literature.

The first appeared in John Bowring's "Russyskaya Antologia," published in 1821. These translations were conscientious attempts to preserve the metre and spirit of the original, but in many instances they are very far from satisfactory. About the same time (1820), translations of Pushkin's "Gipsy," first in prose and then in poetry, appeared.

All these points were touched upon in a comprehensive lecture recently given by Professor Mikhail Morozov at the Institute of World Literature of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. His audience was, for the most part, research students of language and letters. The lecturer spoke at some length on Professor Pinto's article in a magazine called *English*, on English translations of Russian poetry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Professor Morozov marked with satisfaction the accuracy of his English colleagues, their critical evaluation, quoted his opinion on the translations of Alexander Pushkin, and spoke in some detail on the work of Thomas Shaw. This man, who was a teacher at the Lycee in Tsarskoye Selo where Pushkin was educated, made a conscientious translation of his work, but the beauty of his poetry, its fullness of content and rhythms were lost to a great extent in a translation, the exactitude of which does not redeem its pedantic dryness. Thomas

Shaw failed to convey to the reader the real Pushkin and all the enchantment of his lyrics.

As the speaker said, Russians know and love the original too well to be able to give an unbiased judgment on any translation of it. At the same time, he acknowledged the merits of the new English translations, which satisfy the taste of an exacting lover of Russian poetry. One example is the work of Oliver Elton: *Verse from Pushkin and Others*, published in 1935.

Of earlier translations of Russian poetry, though they have a more or less close resemblance to the original they cannot be considered adequate. This is equally true of practically all verse translations of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin" (translated in 1881), Lermontov's "Demon" (translated in 1875), and the exquisite lyrics of the mid-nineteenth-century poets Apollon Maikov and Afanasi Fet.

It is interesting to compare in this connection two translations of familiar verses by Fet: "Whisper Shy Breathing." This charming poem is included in all anthologies, and that is why the Russian reader is particularly alert and exacting as regards its translations. The lecturer said that the most recent of these, made in 1942, conveyed the rhythmic and musical pattern of the original; this distinguishes it from the old translation, done in the nineteenth century, which suggested an imitation of Swinburne and left the impression that the translator perceived the Russian poem through the prism of English. This cannot be said of the new translation, which preserves the spirit of the original. Professor Pinto mentions this in regard to the new English translations.

Fragments of Soviet war poems translated into English were heard with great interest. Konstantin Simonov's "Wait for Me," one of the most popular, sounded very well in English. Summing up, it may safely be asserted that great progress has been made in English translations of verse in the last few decades, and is most clearly marked, as the lecturer pointed out, in the period beginning with 1920. Nevertheless it must be admitted that the new translations are still far from conveying in every case the beauty and infinite shades of meaning of the original. It is extremely difficult to give Mayakovsky's powerful sonorous verse, or Alexander Blok's exquisite lyric quality in another tongue. Yet attempts have been made, and like many of the more adequate translations of war poems, they are evidence of the painstaking and attentive approach of contemporary English translators to Russian poetry.

* * * * *

We are informed that the prize of £50 which was offered by the Brazilian author Paschoal Carlos Magno, for the best long poem by a British author has been awarded to Captain Robert Conquest, at present serving with Central Mediterranean Forces, for "For the Death of a Poet (For D. A., killed in Italy, December 1943)." This Brazil competition under the aegis of the P.E.N. aroused wide attention, and about 250 entries were received, many of them from overseas, mostly from men serving in the Forces and not a few from prisoners of war. Many of the poems submitted were of such outstanding excellence that Senhor Magno has added to his original offer an award of £10 each for the three runners-up: Phoebe Fenwick Gaye—"The Siblings"; Lawrence Durrell—"Cities, Plains and People"; and Richard F. Patterson —"The Smithiad."

Dynamics of American Poetry: CVII

Harcourt Brace sends us Christopher Morley's poems dating from 1929 to 1944, entitled *The Middle Kingdom*. Let us give you a personal note from the author: "The happiest adventure of an early pseudonym was to receive a letter from a prominent publisher saying that the sonnets were so vigorous, why shouldn't the author try his hand at a novel," which suggestion Mr. Morley has followed to advantage. From these some one hundred pages we stop to read "Fluctuat Nec Mergitur":

The Paris that I set my heart upon
Can be defiled: The Luxembourg, les Halles,
The little Café-bar de la Sorbonne,
The Cent Mille Chemises, the Etablissements Duval.
Sacked and shattered, maybe, but not ceded,
Town that made thinking feel, and feeling think—
She has a motto to recall when needed:
I may make heavy weather, but not sink.
Suppose the Louvre and Notre Dame were cindered.
In rubble every bookstore and café,
Yet Paris is a city in the mind.
In every good man's thinking you will find
Her lights; and not blacked out and not surrendered
A sign that says, *Ici on parle français.*

The name Bartlett arrests my attention in a short stanza—"Preface to Bartlett":

In poetry there is one test of art:
With whispering stealth, and keeping delicate time,
It creeps into your mind; you find it there.
You are my poem, then, for in my heart
Lovelier than a sonnet you made rhyme
And I had memorized you unaware.

Bruce Humphries published posthumously fifty sonnets entitled *In Strictest Measure*, by Albert Edward Johansson, who appears to have spent most of his life in California. He was well known there in literary circles. The writing of a love poem is a dangerous enterprise. Successful is Mr. Johansson in "Wonder." A pity his life should have closed so soon:

If I implore you, will you be again
Like rain upon the summer's parching flowers,
Or honour falling on ambitious men,
Or evening after labour's sweating hours?
If I should ask you, would you come to me
As to the half-defeated captain's side
Come reinforcements, foot and cavalry,
To seize the victory he thought denied?
Ah, love, too long have you abode away
From me who needs you as the grass the sun,
Or as a hove-to ship the light of day
Before her harbour may be safely won.
So much I need you that I never know
Content or happy living when you go.

Mr. Morley's sonnets are especially acclaimed and perhaps you will not forget this old, broken soldier, any more than I, after you read "Retreat":

I saw a broken soldier in the West
With antique tricorne hat pulled forward low,
His poor old shoulders hunched, his chin on chest
And belt and sabre sagged. I saw him go
Reeling and tottering, but still he pressed
In one direction only. Driven so,
A left, a right, mechanical, possessed,
The Guard retreated in the Russian snow.

I looked again: my veteran was gone
Across the frozen wilderness of space,
But somewhere he slogs desperately on
Limping, and, accoutrement awry,
Like Napoleon's marshals in disgrace—
Orion, that great straggler of the sky.

A lack of sympathy is well described in "Dogwood Tree":

Whiteness crept up through the woody veins
And spread all sudden on the unknowing air—
That should have cured stupidities and pains?
I could not watch it long. It's rude to stare.

And you made nothing of it, ere it vanished?
That naked beauty of your own dear Day,
Life's whitest body—
I was grateful and astonished,
But what was there to say?

A toss of foaming like the crystal shatter
Of a bursting wave, in magic pause—
And was that all you thought about the matter?
I wanted to tell you how beautiful it was.

This short review we will close with "A Lesson":

The path was strewn, one day last winter
With curly shards of clear ice,
Broken tubes of frozen rain
Blown from the trees.
I wanted to go out and study them again
To see exactly what they looked like,
But I didn't.
I try to teach myself,
We are given only one chance to see things.
We can't always go back for another look.

There is a big hurrah about *The Collected Poetry of Dorothy Parker* (Random House). That she is popular, who questions? That her book contains poetry—ah! there's the rub! She is glib and clever. The rhymes come easily. There is a great deal about the

misery of losing loves or lovers, which can pall if one listens long to the radio. Of her stories this writer knows nothing. One of the better efforts is "Little Words":

When you are gone, there is nor bloom nor leaf,
Nor singing sea at night, nor silver birds;
And I can only stare, and shape my grief
In little words.

I cannot conjure loveliness, to drown
The bitter woe that racks my cords apart.
The weary pen that sets my sorrow down
Feeds at my heart.

There is no mercy in the shifting year,
No beauty wraps me tenderly about.
I turn to little words—so you, my dear,
Can spell them out.

Perhaps amusing you will find two or three where she epitomizes in the following fashion Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Thomas Carlyle and Dickens:

D. G. Rossetti

Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Buried all of his libretti,
Thought the matter over—then
Went and dug them up again.

Thomas Carlyle

Carlyle combined the lit'ry life
Without throwing teacups at his wife,
Remarking, rather testily,
"Oh, stop your dodging, Mrs. C.!"

Charles Dickens

Who call him spurious and shoddy
Shall do it o'er my lifeless body,
I heartily invite such birds
To come outside and say those words.

From Earth Arising is a book by Edith Mae Brown, published by Field Doubleday, which gives us the pitiful tragedy of love and parting because of the war. The opening stanza sets the stage:

God denied me the courage
Not to cry when you left . . .
No glimpse I had of your face
For the plane hid it from view . . .
No smile . . . no word . . . no tear . . .
Regrets . . . hate . . . nor laughter,

Only a vague, haunting fear
Of other wars and other dead . . .
Other drums and other bombs . . .

Through the book we find gifted and poignant pages, as sampled in the following:

If you should ever leave dear heart,
Tell me before you go . . .
And leave me a little of our stardust
To remember you by.
Leave me a few last kisses
So that I'll love you after you've gone,
Leave me a heart-beat or two
To take the place of the beat of drums
That I will hear in the distant night.
Because for all I shall know,
The drum-beats might be your death.
At last . . . kiss me a last good-bye
A final eternal one,
So that I won't wait with tearful eyes,
To see if you will ever return. . . .
I have dreamed and have held stardust
Trembling within my out-stretched hands . . .
I have followed the moon's bright pathway
That leads through the Milky Way . . .
I have fed my soul on the beauty
The stardust left behind
In its wild flight back to you . . .
And the silken image engraved upon my heart
Will for ever be . . . a tribute to you alone.

On page 53 we find lines that must be in all our hearts:

There is no count for those who die
On the battlefields across the sea . . .
There are tears to leave people dumb . . .
For those whom they have loved
And have met their death across the ocean.
Are there no hearts left in the men
Who have caused bloodshed and sorrow?
Or will this thing happen again and yet again,
Until there is not a breath
Left in all this wide world?

I find difficult many of Ralph Gustafson's poems in *Flight into Darkness*, but "City Song" is clear, and I am sure will be liked:

Come, let us take the air
And stop the bus and pay the fare.

Drink sweetly of the city-streets
And dream of love on upper seats.

Summer has broken on this town
Has blossomed gold on concrete lawn

Broken gold in lovers' veins
Smashed the million window-panes.

And when the summer-sun is set,
On the sidewalk we shall sit

In kitchen chairs and listen to
The radio that sings for you.

And you, my love, shall watch with me
The uptown strip of galaxy.

Neon semaphore the dawn
Above the roof when stars are done.

Concerning the author we read:

Ralph Gustafson was born near Sherbrooke, Quebec, in 1909, and is a graduate of Bishop's University and of Oxford. In 1935 a first volume of poems was given the Quebec Government Literary Award. *Alfred the Great*, a chronicle play in verse, was published in England in 1937. He is at present with the British Information Services in New York.

The Beloved Son, by Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff (Bruce Humphries), contains the life story of the Child Jesus in rhymed couplets and is for young children. The author, Mrs. Donald Car, as she is, is one of America's most distinguished poets and has done a lovely thing in this little book for children.

In *Tahl* (Alfred A. Knopf) Jeremy Ingalls has written an astonishing poem, some 600 pages in length, with the gift of excellent poetic technique, of words, myths and symbols. She has been honoured by many awards: the Guggenheim Fellowship and a special grant from the Academy of Arts and Letters, and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. This book has been a work of 13 years and 3 months, and gives us the story of the hero, Tahl, a young composer-aviator, and his intimate and casual acquaintances, and the lore of the world in which we live. What immense energy, plus ability, this book suggests! We quote lines from the first fourth of the book:

Is it fear that makes us dream that there is God?
I heard in Egypt that God was to come.
This has been the world from the beginning:
The brother falls by brother and brother deserts him,
The traveller dies at the knife of the highway robber,
The slaves have died like flies on the public works,
The sick have been thrown from the dikes to the hungry fish;
Sedition, rebellion,
The rich inventing repression,
The poor resenting oppression,
Both wrong, both violent.

When the great are kind, the humble are more greedy;
Nor any generosity assuage
Ungraciousness,
Nor patience make the powerful more kind.
Who eats your bread will lift his heel against you.
Is this a good man's masterpiece,
Is this God's world?

And again:

Thal said:
"But it wasn't the chromium plate, the big cigars
That drove God out of town.
If God is anything at all
I think it's peace of mind.
But there's scant peace in his Jerusalem.
Hate's the enemy and bitterness.
Not a holy day but we saw noses
Punched, a knife in the ribs, a little gunplay
For the glory of God who's left his squabbling nations."

Tahl continues:

Our histories are histories of crime,
But we shall not solve questions by reversing
Numbers here and there in older answers.
The masses sung in the Invalides each May
For Bonaparte recall persisting praise
Of tyranny as heroism. Lines
Between the merciful and cruel slide
Toward a red which gives a longer wave
Of light and sound. But still the prism shines
And the first source of that first light unanswered.
The Russians legal witch-hunts or the rope
That hangs America with martyred Negroes,
The honest heads still thrust on pikes in China
Weigh our hearts to the Egyptian feather.

It must appear from reading these quotations that Miss Jeremy Ingalls is seeking the elusive, the profound. Surely these lines quoted fit very well into the picture of to-day—what the answer? Perhaps all peoples in all countries are seeking a thing they do not find and this search has continued from the first coming of the light. There is so much vim and vigour that we are not surprised to find that Miss Ingalls was born in Gloucester, Mass. The push of the New Englander has been felt throughout our history. We travel through ancient and modern lands, described with the same graphic ability. In the confusion of this present world, when knocking at our minds and hearts and very lives are many burning questions, have you time to read this *Tahl*? It is powerful. We will close this review with a meaningful sentence: "All Judgment Fallible Except the Last."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

The Personal Anthology

ANTHOLOGIES are of two kinds; collections of those poems which the compiler thinks to be the best of their kind, and a collection of those which, for reasons given, he personally prefers, a distinction with a difference. The first is apparently impersonal; the second frankly personal, and modern taste leans to the latter. Both types arouse the lowest passions of the reviewer, for there is unlimited scope for the display of one's own vast erudition in pointing out incredible omissions and the inclusion of equally incredible trash. But whereas in the older type, the mere collection of others' poems, there was little more that the reviewer could say, in the more modern form, the personal selection with a running commentary, there is as much to be said as the compiler has said, and more. I will, however, here control myself. The ideal anthology, when it covers a great range of time, should show the historical continuity or lack of it between the various periods of verse, citing the most representative poems of each period, and using them to illustrate the theme. It should, in brief, be a pageant of English poetry as viewed through the eyes of the compiler. At its best, such a volume should be nearly as valuable for its editorial prose as for the poems cited, and such in my view is Mr. Clifford Bax's *Vintage Verse* (Hollis & Carter Ltd., 10s. 6d.). This is essentially a personal collection, redolent throughout with the admirable though slightly mannered prose of Mr. Clifford Bax, and at the same time a living pageant of English verse from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. One may approve or disapprove of inclusions or omissions (note the reviewer's restraint), but there never will be an anthology to please all readers except one's own—with no apologies for the Irishism—and much of the compiler's comment on both poets and their poems is of the greatest interest. Again and again one meets with paragraphs as memorable as a poem, for example, that on the doubtful progress of poetry (p. 54). The writer's epigrams are equally memorable. "The difference between prose and poetry is the difference between letting words walk and letting them dance," is delightful, and so is the description of George Crabbe, "as though someone were to serve mild-and-bitter in champagne glasses." And I know of no one who has so admirably summed up the virtues and vices of Roundheads and Cavaliers in two pages of vital prose (pp. 86–7).

This essentially personal anthology rouses me to propose, not a competition, but an interesting and surprisingly instructive game. With the Editor's permission, then, I suggest the revival of an ancient fire-side favourite,

Desert Island Poems

The rules of the game are simple. Send to me, c/o the Poetry Society, a list, typed if possible, of your thirty favourite poems, with authors. The whole point of the game is that each player is ruthlessly and absolutely honest with his choice. We do not want to know which you think are the thirty *greatest* poems, nor what you think that you *ought* to like as your thirty favourite poems. What in fact *are* the poems you recite in moments of leisure, the poems of which, if you did not know them by heart, you would want copies on the proverbial desert isle? In brief, place yourself in the Confessional and be brutal in your honesty; if E. W. Wilcox does predominate, and Shelley and Keats be left at the post, well there it is. The first result of your choosing will be to tell you something of yourself. Analyse your own list, and consider why you have chosen it. Put it away and compare it with a new list in five years

time. You may have "grown." I will comment on the lists sent in in time for the next issue, and reproduce as many as the Editor can find room for.

I propose the following rules, for the heightening of interest. All poems to be written since 1800 and not less than eight or more than 150 lines long. No extracts allowed, unless the extract be itself a complete poem in a longer poem, like "Tears, Idle Tears" in "The Princess." It does not matter if the poems are hackneyed, for poems become hackneyed because they are in popular appeal, and generally in fact the best. At the same time, don't go out of your way to find unknown treasures. That may be for a later game; for the moment we want your actual present favourites. Finally, so that all may consider your choice at leisure, all poems in your list must be available in reasonably well-known anthologies or at least in the poet's collected works. I append my own selection, naked and unashamed. As the interest in the results will largely depend on the quantity sent in, be swift in your choosing and utterly honest in your reply. *Christmas Humphreys.*

Sonnet: "Because the misery of some great men," Owen Barfield; The Beginning, Clouds, The Great Lover, The Old Vicarage, Grantchester, The Soldier, Rupert Brooke; Abt Vogler, Robert Browning; The Listeners, De la Mare; Cynara, Ernest Dowson; Epithalamion, Yasmin, J. E. Flecker; Reincarnation, Eva Gore-Booth; Sonnet: "The creeping hours have caught us unaware," Sonnet: "If you were nothing but a sight to share," Gerald Gould; Elegy in a Country Churchyard, Thomas Gray; Lament, Rupert Brooke, W. W. Gibson; Margaritae Sorori, W. E. Henley; Jenny Kissed Me, Leigh Hunt; If, L'Envoi, Rudyard Kipling; Remember Me, Christina Rosetti; I have a rendezvous with death, Alan Seeger; Everyone Sang, Siegfried Sassoon; Before Dawn, Swinburne; Break, break, break, The Mystic, Tears, idle Tears, Tennyson; The Hound of Heaven, Francis Thompson; The Lake Isle of Innisfree, W. B. Yeats.

AUSTRALIAN VERSE

Meanjin Papers: Contemporary Verse and Prose (Meanjin Press: Brisbane, 10s.).
Cadmus, Victor Purcell (Melbourne University Press, 10s. 6d.).
The Merciless Beauty: A Poetry Sequence, Ernest Briggs (Meanjin Press, 5s.).

How rarely the true spirit of poetry invests, with a quiet glory like that of flower or woodland, the written words through which men and women seek to express their sense of the ineffable! For this reason, that it is so rare a thing, this spirit is encouraged to more frequent visitations of a pain-ridden world when magazines such as *Meanjin* make their appearance. Here is something in the nature of a *Spectator*, of another age, and much of it necessarily tentative where Steele's papers were wonderfully sure within narrower limits. It is excellent to see in these red-covered quarterly issues the successes of promise as well as the occasional clear utterance of fully matured minds. Perhaps the most praiseworthy feature of *Meanjin* is the fact that sophistication is no guarantee to appearance in its pages, nor lack of veneer a drawback. The editors evidently believe in a unity and harmony behind the seeming incongruities of everyday life. They have printed in these three issues the approaches towards truth by sincere verse-writers of talent. Add to sincerity a natural

joie de vivre. The pretentious, the Malvolio-complex, which haunts much English verse to-day, is at a minimum here. The *Angry Penguins* hoax, whereby two Australians concocted a "poem" from a set of phrases wearing that look of learned meaninglessness characteristic of much that passes for poetry in every age, for a time, is referred to humorously. Two poems by the English writer, Alex Comfort, which are striking if not beyond criticism, a translation from Rilke by Ernest Briggs, an essay, with translations from the Chinese, on an Early Tang poet, Wang Wei, written by R. Ormsby Martin, are distinctive among much that is worthwhile. If a word of criticism is needed, it should refer to an amiable tendency to venerate unduly one or two contemporary English poets whose value for their generation as a whole has yet to be assessed. A minor poet like W. H. Davies, radiating direct truth of simple feeling, is, it may be, surer of survival than these allegedly major writers whose prose and verse alike weary by obscurity, difficulties of allusion beyond the extreme of Milton, and a reluctance amounting to refusal to face the fact that, as Hardy wrote: "No Fate can change the common lot to rare." That is a trouble in poetry to-day. Shakespeare, Pope, Byron, Tennyson, wrote profoundly, yet the average reader or playgoer may enjoy many a living page of theirs without difficulty. Should not poets attempt objectivity? *Meanjin Papers*, in its own words, "wishes to learn much of the modern mind—but even more of the continuing mind. Many of its writers are in revolt against much of what passes for Australian culture, but it is a revolt which means revival, not degeneration into the dissidence of dissent. In that respect *Meanjin* may be termed traditional. . . . "The true creative artist accepts tradition—and enriches it."

Cadmus seeks, in canto form, to correlate the poet and the world he lives in. The reviewer, unfortunately, is hurled into a melange of Shelleyian and Keatsian rhapsodies far too derivative and slight of impact. Of Tennyson and "his school" Mr. Purcell writes in flippant (or is it caustic?) vein:

> Confused by the deep contemporary plot
> He sang about the Lady of Shalott,
> Or made the crusted banker drop a tear
> For love of Launcelot and Guinevere.
> His school, like him, were quite without direction—
> Poets and life were losing all connection.

This is a popular argument—and fallacy. Poets—true poets—do not "lose connection" in this way so convenient for lesser scribes to step into their shoes. It is as well to say here that Tennyson wrote about the Lady of Shalott because he had it in him to write a poem which has delighted old and young since it first appeared. The test of a poem is just this: does it grip the reader with its beauty? Judged by this criterion Mr. Purcell, and Mr. W. J. Turner, in alluding in print to Tennyson as a minor poet, would scarcely appear to be as closely "in connection" as might be.

In his poetry sequence Mr. Briggs reveals in flashes that he is capable of writing real poetry:

> Gathered before the fire, the questing mind
> Redeems the wreck of time,
> Repairs decay,
> Rebuilds anew

In fresh and springing rhyme
The green fabulous tracery
Of leaves. . . .

There is promise in this brief book, a persuasive striving to write in terms of beauty of true things, though as yet Mr. Briggs' style is too abstract for poetry, which charms us into agreement without need of harangue.

" The Sign of the Phoenix ": II

J. A. C. Ardagh continues to write (see p. 118). Miss Elizabeth Myers sends us two later poems with the remark: It is really surprising how much this sixteen-years-old thinks of Love in a world where only the minority have even heard of it, let alone dwell upon its meaning and responsibility.

INVICTUS

And is he gone into the night?
And has he passed beyond the sunlight's gleaming?
He who went forth to meet the mockery and spite
Of those who would not, could not, understand,
His arrows tipped with hours of golden dreaming,
And love's idealism in his strong right hand.

Pensive, he leant upon the gate,
And heard the music of the fair,
Saw life's gay roundabouts, the glare
Of misty lamps illuminate
Each eager face, heard man's insensate laughter.
And through his dreams there came a longing
To join that careless crowd, with them go thronging
Those blazing thoroughfares, and tread the throbbing earth,
With them to follow madly after
This strange alluring prize that men call mirth.

"Not here, brave heart," he cried, "not here my dreams' desiring,
But higher, higher will I seek
Till I have won love's crystal peak,
To cloud-veiled heights aspiring.
Yet is there not of all your company,
Not even one, a solitary one,
Dreaming as I dream, who will follow me,
Sharing my hopes, doubts, happiness and tears,
That we, hands held, hearts high, may breast the years
Together till Life's pilgrimage is done?"
Not one. But still the music played
To mock the earnest prayers he made.

"O! Love," he cried, "is like a throne
Set in a labyrinth of tortuous endeavour,
And he who makes that seat his own
Knows solitude no more, but Joy, bright-eyed, shall ever
With song make glad his days."
And so he sought along the winding ways,
The hidden alleys of life's multifarious maze,
With never-failing hope, but ever vain. . . .
Until a Stranger, cloaked in black,
Came yesterday and called him back
Out of that darkness-girdled, fear-filled plain
Into a glad new country of eternal dreaming
Where Hope and Love, twin stars, are ever gleaming;
But now there is a sadness in man's heart
To see such beauty from the world depart.

J. A. C. Ardagh.

SONG

I am the singer,
  And you are my song,
And I will sing you
  All the day long.
Your eyes are the music,
  The passionate theme,
Full of strange melody,
  Vague as a dream.

Your smile is the harmony,
  Gentle and wise,
With chords of such depth,
  To bring tears to my eyes.
And my heart will re-echo you
  All the day long,
Nor weary of singing,
  Nor tire of the song.

J. A. C. Ardagh.

* * * * * *

Poetry Reviewers are asked to answer the appended inquiries:

Where can I get a copy of a poem entitled "For those who die in battle"? I am told that this is a French poem and was translated by Pawser (?): R. V. Harvey, 10 Christ Church Crescent, Radlett, Hertfordshire.

"Time flies, and does not return, the wings of man's life are plumed with the feathers of death.": Miss I. Procter, 129 Norton Way South, Letchworth, Herts.

Can you tell me which poem has these lines, "Knee deep in grass. The browsing cattle stood": Mrs. M. F. Finch, Abbey Dene Hotel, Avenue Road, Torquay.

What modern poet uses the expression: "the subterrene sky"? And if the meaning of subterrene is 'underground,' how can a sky, by any stretch of licence, be underground?: H. T. Dufton, Lansdowne, Totnes Road, Paignton.

Would it be possible for you to tell me the name of the author, and where I can get a copy of the poem starting:

"Not understood, we move along asunder,

Our paths grow wider as the seasons creep along the years,
We marvel as we wonder why life," etc.—Miss C. P. Armstrong, "Domus," Oxshott Way, Cobham, Surrey.

"Your sweet love remembered,
Such wealth it brings."
—E. A. Harris, 695 The Broadway, Green Lane, Chadwell Heath, Dagenham.

* * * * * *

In *Ego* 6 Mr. Agate refers to the work of so-called modern poets not always in a complimentary fashion, but as a critic he is very careful what he says about something which he admits he does not understand. After a dose of George Barker in *Horizon* he gives expression to a great Agatean sigh of relief on page 212, adding "Foolish of me to get into a paddy over our mewlers and pukers. Some good poetry is still being written and here is a moving thing sent to me this morning by Mr. William Booth. There is alas no market for this kind of thing, being too intelligible for the highbrow and reviews, and too rare for the popular Press. This being so I quote a few stanzas here":

We shall come home again
and the grey cliffs
radiant with sunshine
and the white gulls
will welcome us.
We shall come home again
maybe in April
when the high clouds
are casting their shadows
over the Downslands,
golden with buttercups;
and the wild birds
will sing to us
from their green hedgerows,
and the pale primrose
will hail our home coming.

After the weary years
after the waiting,
waiting and watching,
watching the blue smoke
curling and trailing;
dreaming—and waiting—
—endless the waiting—
after the longing, maddened with dreaming
we shall come home.

Shall we stand moodily
at the street corners
strangers in village streets
hometowns and playgrounds
that once knew our footsteps?

Shall we be pale ghosts
haunting your Peace feasts
spoiling your revels,
or will a great People
remembering greatly
proudly and gratefully
welcome us home?

The guns will be silent
and silent the bugles,
and the green grasses
will cover the war scars:

Forgotten the war news
forgotten the sirens,
but we shall remember,
and the grey cliffs
and the white gulls
will remember and welcome us,
when we come home;
. . . . when we come home.

This is only about half of "the most beautiful thing in the way of verse this war has produced": the complete poem will be included in a collection we hope our versatile contributor will publish shortly.

ELIZABETH MYERS' REVIEW OF REDWOOD ANDERSON'S POETRY

Early in her appreciation of J. R. Anderson's poetry Elizabeth Myers tells us—"his poetry enshrines romance, vision, beauty and God-like imagination"—and apart from this last too rhetorical tribute I agree with this and with much that she says about him. It was an appreciation by an ardent admirer of Elizabeth Myers' article appearing in a subsequent number, which drew my attention once again to this review, and thus brought vividly to mind what during a hasty perusal I had not fully realised previously, and which constitutes its outstanding point of interest in her contention, expressed in a quotation I will give a little later, that Anderson, in certain passages "rises superior to the obstinately classical poetry of great Milton."

This is no small claim, and I will say at once I think such a comparison unfortunate. There is no reason in theory why a poet of to-day should not excel above all poetry yet written, though in practice it seems that some existing poetry in relation to its own subject matter cannot be surpassed, and if succeeding poetry should appear to outvie the old, it would be by virtue of suitability of subject and expression to a different age rather than in essential merit.

Comparisons of this sort are never very fruitful of satisfactory results; for one thing the ultimate verdict must be largely a matter of individual opinion. Before proceeding to comment on the merits of the two poets as compared by Elizabeth Myers, I propose to refer very briefly to some further remarks in her article as illustrating to some extent her standpoint. Speaking of modern poetry she tells us: "Beauty, goodness, simplicity, form and imagination have all gone overboard." She goes on to ask, What is Poetry? but as is usual when that question is asked she does not supply an answer, but mentions one of the things it may be expected to do, quoting Poe as saying "poetry should give the soul an elevating excitement." "Very few poets do this," she tells us, "with every poem they write." She mentions three, Wordsworth, Milton and Arnold, who do not come up to this standard.

I suggest this process of "soul elevating" is a dual one, demanding a sympathetic soul to be stimulated. She goes on to mention other poets who "always" excite by this "soul elation." Such a contention as this is not really much of a test—one continuous thrill of "soul excitation" through all the pages of "Paradise Lost," for instance, would be hardly compatible with a work of such magnitude, and so much depends upon the nature of the excitement. Of the poets she places among those always able to excite, Tennyson, whose work I much admire but much of whose "In Memoriam" I can only read with labour, has written in the "Princess" some of the most delightful lyrics we have, but parts of the same poem are definitely not "soul stirring." It is always a question of what the poet is aiming to achieve and the kind of attention he demands. Again, I will confess, Poe's "Raven" has never aroused in me the kind of sentiment which seems to have been prevalent when it was written. John Redwood Anderson is, of course, included among those able to stimulate the soul with every poem they write, which means I presume to do so continuously, because doubtless Elizabeth Myers will not contend there are no parts of "Paradise Lost" which come under her definition.

A little later she has occasion to speak of the "poetic nobility of clods of earth, of the sand, of swathes of cut hay, of old brown hands kneading bread." One recognises, of course, the Divine Origin common to all Creation, in which may be traced

a designed proportion, but when one speaks of the "poetic nobility" of fragmentary things, of clods of earth, that sense of proportion seems in danger of being infringed. Even at its best this nobility is a shorn nobility; since the transgression pictured in "Paradise Lost" the world we know is a somewhat distorted world, no longer perfect, "a world of woe"; the fact is, all is not noble, even among inanimate things.

When she goes on to say "the soul of a great city is revealed through the *personalities* (her italics) of gasometer, factory, railway-arch, tram and tram-lines," I not being at all sure that these have any soul-possessing properties at all, am provoked to wonder. "Personality" embraces several things these do not possess, and which they only could be said to possess by way of an elaborate make believe. All poetry is not make believe and there is feigning based upon feigning rather than upon reality. This is not so hypercritical as it may sound, the statement is there and it is with statements we are dealing. Evidently the machine age will not be lacking its poets and that is very well and good, but how far is a poet to go in portraying the "pitiful splendour of the inanimate, of the heart, passionate and bright, of man-made things"?—I should say, not very far.

To regard man-made things as personalities is to render an absurd tribute, unless, of course, as is often done, they are made objects of obvious fiction; and to talk of "the vehement drama of the life of the machine," seems to me very much the same as speaking of the vehement drama of the life of a doll.

There is no drama apart from intellect and emotion. The destruction of some work achieved by great endeavour is a human tragedy, not the tragedy of a machine.

In comparing the quotations referred to, from Anderson's poem, "The Human Dawn," with Milton's "Paradise Lost," it should be borne in mind that Milton was a firm believer in Genesis, as indeed in all the biblical teaching: any departure from the fundamental details of the Bible story in the writing of a later poet vitiates comparison of the poetry "pure and simple," which I contend, in a theme such as "Paradise Lost," cannot be disassociated from the ethics of the work itself; two poets, to the extent of the variance supposed of their views on those matters, must be working under different inspirations, and there may be a point where the difference is so vital that no splendour of poetic language suffices to make good the discrepancy.

However, I have no wish to turn this into a theological discussion and there seems to be sufficient common ground to sustain an argument upholding the earlier poet. At the same time, one who believes in the original fall of Man by transgression of Divine Law, would be inclined to resent an attitude in a writer which would allow him to take what suits him in the moral aspects of this age-old story, and at the same time interpose on occasion other conclusions as he prefers. In other words I am inclined to think that in the case of an account so old and so widely received, a writer should either accept it as it is or leave it alone. But that again is a matter of opinion.

Apart from the arresting Prize Poem in a recent number of the POETRY REVIEW, I have not read any of J. R. Anderson's work other than the quotations given by Elizabeth Myers, my sole purpose here is to discuss her very interesting article, and I do not gather that the "Human Dawn" is intended as a kind of up-to-date "Paradise Lost," though she tells us "as soon as this poem opens, comparison with Milton's presentation of Adam and Eve insistently comes to the mind."

Her line of thought on this subject is illustrated on p. 132, beginning: "As a poet,

Dryden put down 'Paradise Lost' saying 'this man cuts us all out and the ancients too,' it was Addison who, in a series of *Spectators*, awakened the English to the splendour of Milton's poetry. Since then Milton has been so enthusiastically accepted that hardly a word of criticism is brooked against him.

"Nevertheless, Milton, like good Homer, nods. As a fact, he has a devilish trick of wrecking many a conversation piece in his *magnum opus* by urging his learning on his reader, and he often thinks it beneath his theme to be simple and earthy, a handicap which doubtless arises from his startling lack of association with *any one country district* of his native land. Adam, a primitive man oppresses us by discoursing like a medieval speculator upon the properties of things, and Eve can be as pedantic as any blue-stocking who ever bored the wits under the table of an eighteenth-century salon.

"If ever a poet perfected himself in the 'organ-music of speech' Milton did (and it should not be overlooked that Milton was an intensely musical man who, all his life, delighted in playing the organ), but life touches every variety in the whole register of sounds, and the solid great strokes of Milton's blank verse, wonderful as they are in achieving the effect of a mighty choir singing his majestic argument, stagger and become unwieldy as his theme touches the lighter, the more tender and homely aspects of the shared life of our first parents."

To compare the two poets' portrait of Eve, which please look up. I suppose there are many, even to-day, who are as pleased to read what Milton has included of learning in his poem as there are those who in a more educated age are impatient of it. After all, the learned allusions fit very well into the wide scope of this poem, and the allegation that he thought it "beneath his theme to be simple and earthy" is doubtless true. His theme was the most stupendous ever incorporated in a poem, it was all of vital significance to him, and without doubt he felt that only the best work he could put forth, with sustained and masterly effort fitted to his subject, should be his aim.

Not for him here to set the shepherds dancing to the tune of simple and earthy ditties, or to lower the tone of his grand organ music in the manner of some modern organ players who misuse their instruments in ridiculous antics condescending to an enfeebled taste.

For myself, turning again to the pages of "Paradise Lost," after reading the extract mentioned above, I was delighted to find how easy reading, and often even "light" and "modern" much of this verse is, with its magnificent descriptions, unsurpassed riches of imagination and its deep stern conviction, flaming in high resolve, undiminished to the end.

Let us then compare the two poets' portraits of Eve, as we are invited to do. Here is Milton's:

> She, as a veil, down to the slender waist
> Her unadornèd golden tresses wore
> Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved,
> As the vine curls her tendrils. . . .

I ask the discerning reader to consider these lines carefully. Have we not here simplicity, reticence, admirable description, tender and intimate? Do these lines, "unwieldy," stagger with heavy accents, is there no light sweetness in "Her unadorned

golden tresses wore"? And note he says "golden," not "gold," and he speaks of her hair as hair, not as being like some fanciful image of hair; "wanton ringlets waved, as the vine curls her tendrils"; he does not say they are like the vine, but curl as the vine's tendrils curl.

I think these are four beautifully accomplished lines, nor can I see in them any of that curious effect of petrefaction complained of. Let us now consider one of the passages in which, so we are told, there is no doubt Anderson's lines "rise superior to the obstinately classical poetry of great Milton," and find if we may, "how more life and light-pulsing is Anderson's touch."

> ". . . her hair's luxury poured in one bronze stream
> over her shoulder's ledge, rippled over
> one clear breast and tumultuously fell
> bright-foamed upon the grass . . .

We see here, not as Milton shows us, the living presentment of the woman Eve, but an image, as Elizabeth Myers says, with "the open air sunniness of a Monet"—I see no justification in Milton's lines for her alleged "indoor tapestry—stuffiness of a Cuyp"—but let us continue. A fine picture here, if you like, portrayed in elaborate metaphorical imagery, suggestive, too, if we take into consideration "her shoulder's ledge," of the sculptor's art or perhaps a bronze casting.

To say hair "poured" is perhaps stretching the metaphor a little, but the word is entirely in accordance with "one bronze stream," which may mean either a stream of bronze or a bronze-coloured stream, but stream is plain enough, and there is considerable difference between hair streaming and hair regarded as a stream. Viewed in one aspect, the whole idea of stream as something constantly moving away, to some extent suggests a disparting of unity and seems a not too happy symbol when referring to a woman's hair. Be that as it may, in my opinion Milton's forthright and graceful description of the thing itself is preferable to this metaphorical picture of Anderson's. "How more life and light-pulsing," she comments, but is it?

We now come to consider the second of the two contrasts as quoted by her, "how the two poets describe the after-eating of the apple" (p. 133).

If Milton's lines are vulnerable to criticism I have no words for the purpose. The two poems have here reached the stage of the fatal transgression, that tragic breaking of Divine Command which according to Milton at any rate, involved ruin, complete and final.

Anderson's description is more imposing on a first reading than when read a second time, and still less convincing subsequently, but I will say that the vigour and vividness of these lines would go far towards averting criticism had it not been directly challenged by this comparison. There is certainly no subtle reticence about this passage; I think Milton would have used another word than "love" in the second line, if indeed he had accepted this interpretation of evolution, and when we come to "splendid brink," unless I have misunderstood it, it begins to go wrong for me. There is in truth nothing "splendid" here; the splendour has faded, nothing remains but irremediable loss; they are already over the brink beyond recall.

We may reflect that Milton has uttered in one short half line the sum and substance of half a dozen in the contrasted poem. Anderson may tip-toe here, though he does not whisper; but Milton in his calm serenity towers above this ferment as the eternal

stars outshine the flaring lights proclaming the drama of the World's First Kiss; and in truth this was not the "World's first kiss," that had happened earlier under happier conditions: as to which I recall Milton's melodious voice.

"So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight
Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met.

Without following the comparison further, Dryden in his verdict on "Paradise Lost" still seems to have the rights of it: "this man cuts us all out and the ancients too"—after which being said, John Redwood Anderson still has a brilliant galaxy to keep him company.

Thetford, February 2. RAYMUND BOURNE.

ON THE SONNET BY THE PREMIUM EDITOR,

POETRY REVIEW, *October to December* 1944

Owing to a painful illness affecting the eyes my reading has been limited to brief snatches, so when I alighted upon this sonnet I memorised it that I might study it in its varying moods. That its form falls into a series of unrhymed couplets, each containing its own image, makes memorising easy although this by-the-way arrangement in no way interrupts the descriptive flow. The sonnet is dedicated to a curved experience which begins in the shadows of time, soars into the timeless and, describing an arc, descends again into time. Two lovely half-lines, "The veil wears thin" and "the wonted shadow grows," introduce and end this liberating excursion into the sublime. The octet is charged with the upward flight and is full of movement and melody with its fleeing shadows, a breaking dawn, chiming words and the unceasing threshing by the immortals in their high and holy task. In the sextet the descending momentum, now gracious, reaches the immediate activities of the poet, the flowing pen and the flying thought, while the imagery of the rose bestows its perfume on the pen, its petalled flight on the thought and so inevitably to the fluttering "fall at dusk." The "wonted shadow" dims then quenches the ecstatic activities of the "timeless moments."

The ego of this joyous experience is seen before and after, once in a backward glance, the disintegration of the veil having already begun, wrapped "in shadows and the lonely flesh," and again in the bereft figure, "left, empty of light, a husk." In the region of the timeless the ego is lost in the light of the sublime, recovering self-consciousness with the return of the shadow in the "hand of time."

Now happens the miracle of the poem without which the poet is but a sorry and frustrated figure of despair. His reader begins to find himself involved in the continuity and changefulness of the experience; he studies it subjectively; its irresistible flow is carried on in his own mind or spirit; he cannot consider the closing figure as the conclusion of the whole matter; the shadow at its densest restarts the process of wearing thin, and under its own momentum the curved journey returns to the starting-point completing its arc. No more static is Watt's pictured "Hope," listening intently in temporary blindness to "silence implying sound," or the waiting lover in J. C. Squire's

"Dumbly I lie all shadowed, I lie all shadowed
And dumbly wait for you to shine again."

Such are the experiences of the word-hungry poet as, also, is that of Walter de la Mare in "The Scribe" who, when his pen has ceased to flow, touches the profound,

"My worn reeds broken, All words forgotten—
The dark tarn dry, Thou, Lord, and I."

During early meditations the central image of the poem appeared to be the ego or the experience; later, while thinking on the absent title of the sonnet, I found the very kernel of the concept deeply imbedded in the octet. It is "the grain of truth," the sole concern of the immortals, and a brief lift of the final tremulous curtain gives a glimpse into the unseen which is their threshing-floor. The qualifying phrase, "whose leavening is crime" is rich in its brevity and its precise and pregnant words, "leavening" and "crime." Here in a *précis* is the whole reason for which the sonnet was presumably written, the lifting of the standard of the spirit against the presumptuous poet, the writing on the wall against those found wanting, and the stern warning to the few who may yet take heed to themselves in a new awe and humility. In a later saunter through the sonnet, savouring the charm of its vowel-sounds, its assonances and its unobtrusive alliteration, one lingers over the rare adjectives, three of them in enchanting opposition to the words they qualify—"viewless dawn," "unheard carillons," "timeless moments," and the few others making their exquisite combinations as in "the lonely flesh," the "wonted shadow" and the one inversion, "manna, dew-fresh." I thank the Premium Editor sincerely for his satisfying and liberating sonnet.

Derby, February 21st. JANE SCOTT PARSONS.

[The Premium Editor who was shown this letter suggested, after recovering from a natural embarrassment, that the mere effort to recollect the experience of inspiration must have resulted in a fresh upsurge of that mysterious power, as though one might summon spirits from the vasty deep by the mere mention of their names. In any case he disavows responsibility for the extreme virtuosity with which he has been so delightfully credited and, being driven back upon the only defence open to him, since his authorship is undoubted, claims that whatever excellence there is in his sonnet was accidental, if not unintended, and has importance only as a demonstration of the unestimable value of what he so often advocates, that is of awaiting the deep emotional compulsion to create before attempting that miracle. For a miracle it is when anyone writes better than he can and says more than he thought.]

I thank you for the latest number of THE POETRY REVIEW, which, in its spring-like cover has come with the primroses. THE POETRY REVIEW always affords one much enjoyment, but recent issues have been particularly interesting by reason of the "Greenwood Competition" poems. I was much impressed by J. Redwood Anderson's "Lazarus." One of last year's poems which most arrested me was "When," by Roberta Shuttleworth. . . . How high would be the standard of poetry could such perfection as suggested by her beautiful couplet be attained! EDITHA JENKINSON, Sheffield.

The Gardener's Plea

(After reading Mr. H. W. Harding's "Song to an Old Plum Tree)
POETRY REVIEW, May–June 1944.

POET, haste not to fell that tree,
So eloquently dumb;
Pleading by that scant bloom it bore,
For succour swift at its sick core;
Your yield might yet be bushels more
Than one poor wasp-spurned plum.

Delve where the tap-root greedily
Sucks in the sour sub-soil;
Sever this tough and coarsened thong,
Let loose the matted fibrous throng,
In mould lime-flecked spread wide and long,

All tortured twists uncoil.
But if top growth too withered be,
Then take the grafting knife,
With scions choice the old head cap,
And watch these nurslings thrive and lap
The mother tree's rich rising sap,
The marvel of new life.

And when your raptured gaze shall see
The first tight buds appear,
Will you not share with him, whose kiss
Met warming marble, all the bliss
That from cold death flushed life in this Arboreal Galatea?

Hampton Court. FLORENCE LUCAS THOMPSON.

STANLEY J. DOWHAN

I have just been enjoying the new number of the POETRY REVIEW.

There is a rather odd reference on page 112 to the poetry of S. J. Dowhan. (The name, incidentally, is spelled "Dowham" in the REVIEW.)

The sentence that rather shocked me is this: ". . . we are buffeted by an impacting stream of strong but trite enough matter much of it in a colonial vernacular which lacks, however, the tang of novelty."

I have no quarrel with the opinion expressed, though it is only fair to say that Dowhan, as one who enlisted in the Canadian Army as a lad of 21, has hardly had much time on active service to develop a faculty of self-criticism. A close reading of his book will discover isolated lines and stanzas of authentic poetry rubbing up against the cliches.

What caught my eye is the peculiar use of the word "colonial." The *Oxford Concise Dictionary* defines the word as meaning: "Inhabitant of a colony, esp. of a British self-governing or Crown Colony."

Stanley Dowhan was born in the independent, sovereign nation of Canada. His mother was Russian, his father Dutch. His vernacular might be described as "primi-

tive," or "pioneer," but to use the word "colonial" in connection with it leaves an unjustifiable implication.

I have written about this rather trivial point because I know the value you place on precision; and because, while Canadians for the most part have outgrown any morbid sensitivity about the widespread misunderstanding of their political position within the Commonwealth, as far as other countries are concerned, they still find it embarrassing, perhaps for family reasons, to see it misapprehended in the Mother Country.

With all good wishes,

The Canadian Press, Fleet St., E.C.4, June 8. CHARLES BRUCE.

AGAIN THOSE BIRDS

Under the inspiration of the current number of THE POETRY REVIEW I have written the appended as a tribute to the many fine poems it contains.

Oh sweet to hear again those measures, singing
A song almost forgotten in our day;
To be aware once more of bird song, ringing
From shaking throats, a well remembered way.

I who had sought this music all but vainly,
Finding a lonely piping here and there
(Pure strings, struck true, among those plucked insanely),
Among the deaf, the sick, the unaware.

I came upon them, clustered close together,
Their lovely colours blended in rare light
Which rises only after stormy weather,
Each feather folded exquisitely right.

Hope, in that pure, high chorus spring to being,
Flared on the dark perversity of sound,
Hinting at future shapes and shadows fleeing
Before new green's advance on fallow ground.

Garden City, Long Island. GRACE BUCHANAN SHERWOOD.

As my annual subscription is due once more I should like to take the opportunity of adding a very small donation to express my thanks for THE POETRY REVIEW and all that it stands for. Certainly the arrival of the magazine is, at the present, one of the high-lights of my daily life, and I look forward to each issue with pleasure. The various competitions are always exciting even though one's own efforts may be of little worth, but you get to know the names of the regular contributors and watch out for them in the lists till you feel you know something about the persons themselves.

With good wishes for continued prosperity in the year ahead. I am sure the Society is a service to the nation as there are so many poetry-lovers about now. In these days people need the inspiration and encouragement for renewed faith which poetry should and does supply: RACHEL E. BOULTON, Cranham.

The Premium Editor's Report

THE pessimists who have predicted that with the coming of peace the popularity (if one may use so dubious a word in this connection) of poetry would decline, are certainly not confirmed by the vitality shown by the continual growth of this competition. It might be said that the war is not over, indeed there is truth in the contention; but since all things are comparative, the Japanese war might fairly be said to have been overwhelmed, for us at any rate, in the German peace, and I prefer to believe that we love poetry now for its own sake and not because the Japanese are still resisting. But before I begin my review of the new Premium MSS. I feel it to be necessary to call attention to a matter which I had supposed would be obvious to any competitor who spared it a moment's thought. The difficulty of reading manuscript, when this is hand-written, is bound to militate against its proper valuation. Nearly all the competitors in this competition who excuse themselves the trouble and moderate expense of having their poems typed, write badly, many of them upon odd scraps of paper and without that care which would be considerate to one whose labours are arduous enough without further avoidable and actual physical difficulty being added unto them. The gain, therefore, will be mutual if entries are typed. My eyes and temper will be soothed and my judgment, such as it is, sharpened for the delicate task of doing justice to your poems. This I conceive to be the general desire and therefore I invite your co-operation in that laudable aspiration. I should be as sorry as anyone if some rose of poetry is doomed to blush unseen because of the obscurity amid which I am asked to search for it.

My text this time is Sentimentality, spelt with a capital letter; not because there has been any recurrent epidemic of that fell disease in this Competition but because it shows a persistent strength, strange in anything so acquiescent, which waxes and wanes but slightly, and may, for all I know, possess contagious properties. The difference between sentiment and sentimentality is vastly more than five letters. Sentiment is a vital and a vitalising force, an emanation of the soul in man, and I suppose the source of most personal greatness either of word or deed. It is, of course, an emotional force; it can serve as a synonym for the very word, emotion, and is, therefore, the first and essential ingredient for the creation of poetry. It is the antithesis of cerebration, as inspiration is of intellect, and without it there can be no immortality.

What then is sentimentality? If cerebration is the opposite of sentiment, sentimentality is its negative. Sentiment is a positive force, alive and often incandescent. Sentimentality is a dead thing with a sickly simulacrum of life, which surrenders itself entirely to an acquiescent mood. It is akin to self-pity, not a source of strength, as pity is, but of weakness.

Thus when it is met with in verse it has a simpering and an apologetic air, wearing the pretty smiles of inanity and arousing the brute in most of us. Its current is certainly too weak to carry us away; its own victim drowns in the static water of mawkish similes and tender trivialities. Sweet it is but with the sweetness of decay, the decay of vigour and positive energy; and its stock-in-trade of pretty-prettinesses cum trite and refined reflections, the more spineless nostalgias and, on occasion, those feebly fervid but unconsidered preferences and dislikes, form a synthesis as far from that clear realism which is the poet's truth as chalk is from cheese.

Realism seems so far from poetry and yet while it is unnecessary that it should intrude its uglier sides either into polite conversation or into verse, it is the only forcing-bed for truth and the only soil for true sentiment. If you would leap into the clouds your feet must be braced upon the ground and that ground must be firm; and poetry should be a leap not an idle drifting, an individual effort not an easy acquiescence in the superficial commonplaces of obvious beauty pointed with the ideas and beliefs of the meagre-minded many.

So the poet should be what might be described as a convertible cynic, hard to convince but always succumbing to the truth which so seldom, in this life, lies upon the surface or is enshrined within the obvious. His portion is hard work and small thanks, but if the labour be honest he will be beyond fear or favour for he will have mastered life in mastering his Art.

I have awarded the Premium again to JEAN KENWARD, of Marylebone, N.W.1, whose recent success with a delightfully lyrical poem called "The Fool" will be remembered. Her new success is achieved by "Exequy," which we print in full.

The Highly Commended list is full too of excellent poems, in particular one by Molly Gilbert, aged 17, which is a most sustained effort of approximately 140 lines and which occasioned me some doubt in making my award to Miss Kenward. However, the tenderly exquisite feeling of the winner's poem turned the scale.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Wilfred H. Bartlett, Calverleigh;
E. B. W. Chappelow, Englefield Green;
Molly Gilbert, Swindon;
Norman Alliston Herbert, Swindon;
Edgar Jones, North Harrow;
James Crawford Milne, Arbroath;
Irene H. Moody, British Columbia;
Cynthia Palmer, York;
John Preston, Southend-on-Sea.

COMMENDED

Thomas Astore, Romford;
D. R. W. Carr, Ferryhill;
T. E. Casson, Pennington, Lancs.;
Alice E. Collinge, Bolton;
Capt. Greswolde Davis, R.N., Melbourne;
R. G. Duff, Teignmouth;
Jessie B. Heard, Bristol 7;
Marguerite Johansen, Swindon;
Arthur Kidd, Woodford Green;
Redcliffe McKie, Brighton;
Editha Melbourne, Maidstone;
Diana M. Moore, London, W.2;
Jane Scott Parsons. Derby;
Nancy Pollok, Wolverhampton;
Margery Smith, Kendal;
G. A. Squires, Norwich;
Joan Willson, London, S.W.5;
J. Winbolt, London, S.E.19.

One final word—what inspiration floats upon the Swindon air? No less than three names of competitors from there appear in our lists. One is tempted to ask why THE POETRY SOCIETY is not represented in so rarefied an atmosphere by a flourishing local centre and I commend the thought to those three considerable Swindon poets for consideration and joint consultation. Other contributors may take this hint and communicate with the Director.

The usual premium offer for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium

Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should reach "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1," by August 15th, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 5s. should be sent. It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to THE POETRY REVIEW, and that each poem bears the name and address of the author. (Entries received after the formal closing date are carried forward to the next adjudication.)

Exequy

HERE, under the quiet bough
Soldier, make your dwelling now
Where the reverend shadows pass
(Sigh alack . . . and sigh alas . . .);
Silver breath and body don you
While the Moon shall wait upon you,
Wind and rain and barley seed
Fashioning your battle weed.
Topaz, jacynth, emerald,
Turquoise exquisitely called
Cloth of gold intangible
Diamond, invisible,

Lime blossom, sweet-briar,
And the pious lily flower
Here are found; and here the Sun
Guest unbidden, yet will come
Welding with his fingers warm
Love to shelter you from harm.
Thus, with all things natural
Curious and beautiful
Soldier brave and debonair
Sleep you well and sleep you fair.

Underneath the quiet bough
You must make your dwelling now:
Cavern large enough to woo
All that lovely is, and true
To its adamantine shade:
Summer's eager cavalcade
Here approaches, and the swallow
After will divinely follow
At your liquid throat to sip,
While the fecund mole shall dip
Fist as small as icicle
In the iris' tender pool,
And the worm, that courtier
Mild as any pardoner

Shall with soft compassion
Give you absolution.
Roses arrogantly red
In perpetual colonnade
So will blossom, bud and bloom
My your everlasting tomb
Even Time will pause, and see
Therein immortality,
While with pansy, mignonette,
Gillyflowers, bergamot,
Shades of rosemary and rue,
Death himself will mourn for you.

JEAN KENWARD.

In *The Poetry of Freedom*, edited by Wm. Rose Benét, Pulitzer prize poet, and Norman Cousins, Editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*—over 800 pages—we have expressions from the early Greeks to the young men fighting in the second World War, inspired by the ever-new hope of a better world. This is a book that every library should possess. There has been so much seeking after betterment, through centuries, it would seem, in the light of our present position, that we have not found, in war, the way. This anthology carries us to every country on this spinning globe, expressing the everlasting desire for freedom for all peoples.

Speech

THOUGH speech proclaims the sovereign state of man,
The words are few which from the grave have stirred,
Out of the flood since utterance began
Only the echoes of the Great are heard.

Beyond the twilight of departed time
Brave speech survives our errors to confute,
In deathless prose, or else immortal rhyme,
Great words live on while all the rest are mute.

Through time and space the voice of Truth can thrill
Each age adds wisdom to the classic store,
Some day the music of the minstrels will
O'ercome the tumult of the cannon's roar.

Leslie Greene.

The Last Companion

IF I could but one book of poems keep,
To give my mind its pleasures in old age;
To ease that twilight that precedes death's sleep,
'Til finis has been writ on my last page:
I do not doubt the Sonnets as my choice,
For these, I know, brave company can give;
And all the music of Will Shakespeare's voice
Would soothe my ears in those last days I live.

Thus I would hear that lovely English tongue,
In metred numbers pouring forth his heart;
Would hear his songs of beauty once more sung,
And hearing thus, be ready to depart.
For who when hearing England's sweetest breath,
Could other music want when greeting death?

E. Gordon Oxenham.

The publishers (PL, London) of *Farewell and Welcome*, by Ronald Bottrall, cloth 6s., tell us that Mr. Bottrall published his first volume, *The Loosening*, in 1931, and that ever since he has held the attention of every serious reader by the ambitiousness of his subjects and the astonishing command of technique he displays in elaborating them." In the early thirties many other young poets were astonishing us by these qualities; but most of his contemporaries seem to have grown out of the faults of ambitious precocity. But not so Mr. Bottrall and so he disappoints "the serious reader." Occasionally the latter thinks he has discovered a gleam of meaning in a difficult poem and feels a thrill of satisfaction which he may confuse with aesthetic pleasure. At other times he is startled by the challenge of some ugly word which formerly would have been regarded as unprintable. In reading this volume it is certainly as well to have a good dictionary at hand. But it is a pity that Mr. Bottrall has not grown out of this precocious cleverness, for he gives us also good evidence of real poetic talent underlying the superficial technique and command of words.